



REACHING FOR CERTAINTY

FUNDAMENTALISM



Speak Up For Tomorrow's World!

ONE WORLD WEEK 21-28 OCTOBER 1990

Take off with One World Week this year! Get together, have fun and learn more about the world we live in. This year thousands of people will be joining in.

This year's theme – *Speak Up for Tomorrow's World* – invites you:

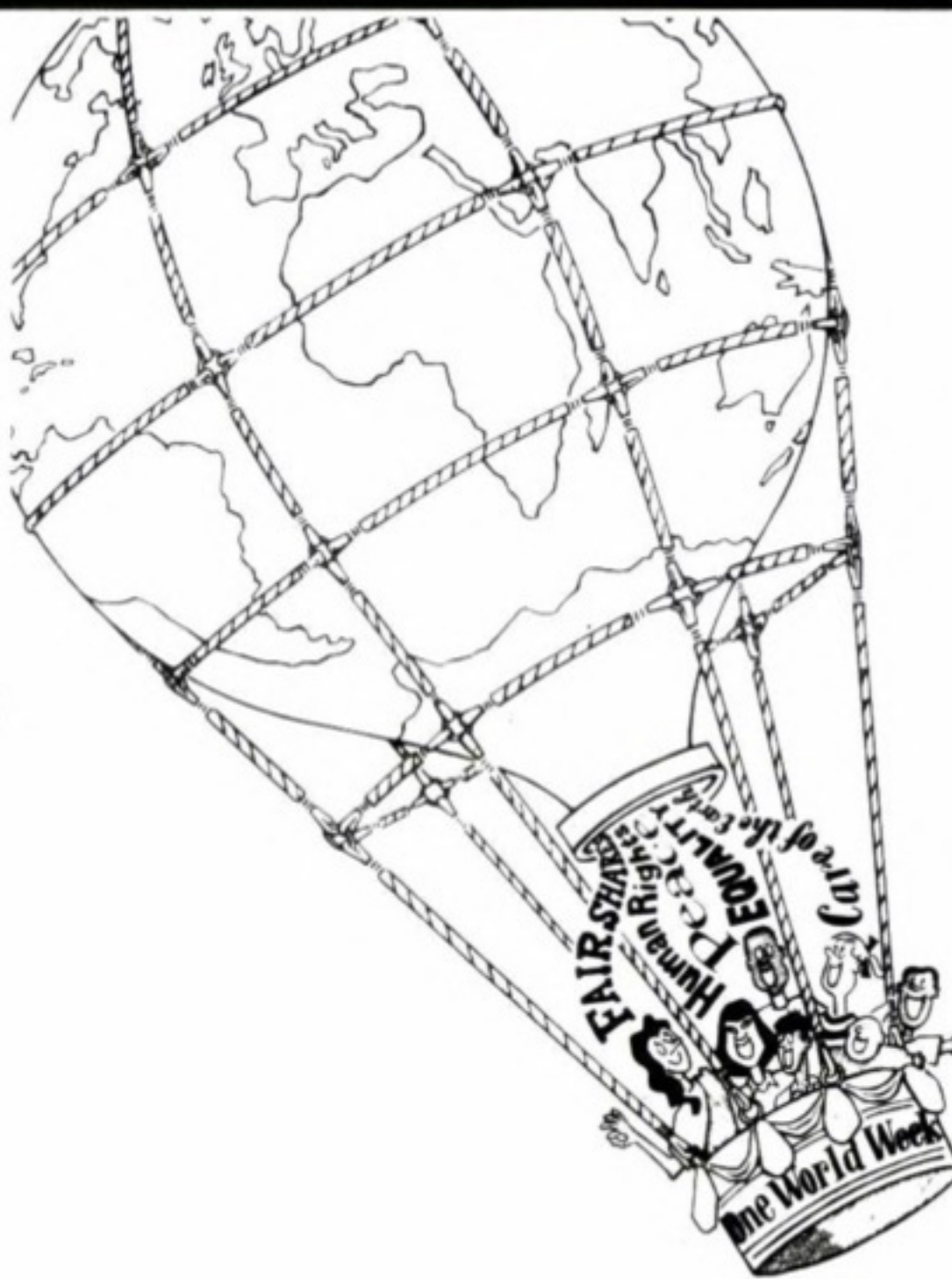
- to air your views about what we want to preserve and what you want to change in our world
- encourage others, particularly young people, to have their say about what concerns them in their community, country and world
- make your voices heard where it matters by encouraging decision makers to listen!



For further information contact

One World Week, PO Box 100,
London SE1 7RT

Send an sae for a free leaflet, or
£4.00 for a copy of 'We Could
Do That!', a 64 page handbook
packed with ideas for conscious-
ness raising in OWW and at
other times of the year.



**ONE WORLD WEEK
21 – 28 OCTOBER 1990**

GREENBELT *Rumours of* GLORY

The Greenbelt Festival is well aware of the problems and issues facing today's world. It brings together Christian speakers and artists from all over the world to discuss and debate them.

SUBJECTS include: Green Issues: The Influence of America: Eastern Europe: Palestine: Liberation Theology: Good News and the Poor.

SPEAKERS include: Tony Campolo (USA); Tim Cooper (UK); Alison Davies (UK); Meryl Doney (UK); Henk Hart (Canada); Joan King (UK); Roy McCloughry (UK).

There's a lot of MUSIC too, from Runrig (Scotland); Mike Peters (of The Alarm) (Wales); Fat and Frantic (England); Machanic Manyeruke (Zimbabwe); The Velvettes (New Zealand); Larry Norman (USA) ... and hundreds more.

THEATRE-wise, there's Virginia McKenna in *Sacred Elephant* by Heathcote Williams; J Geoffrey Stevenson in *Barefoot in Paradise*; plus much more.

ALSO: FASHION; FRINGE; FILM; FINE ARTS; and plenty of FUN; phew!

AND Creche and children's activities on all four days. Bring your tent and discover radical Christianity with a world view that's free of self-indulgent platitudes.

**GREENBELT '90: AN ARTS FESTIVAL BY
CHRISTIANS FOR EVERYONE • 24th – 27th AUGUST**

CASTLE ASHBY PARK, NORTHANTS

Call 071 700 6585 for a free poster and booking form

Hotline information: 071-609 4830



ISSN 0305 9529

New Internationalist exists to report on the issues of world poverty and inequality; to focus attention on the unjust relationship between the powerful and powerless in both rich and poor nations; to debate and campaign for the radical changes necessary within and between those nations if the basic material and spiritual needs of all are to be met; and to bring to life the people, the ideas and the action in the fight for world development.

The NI magazine is edited, produced and sold by New Internationalist Publications Ltd which is co-operatively run by:-

Vanessa Baird, Chris Brazier, Wayne Ellwood, Alan Hughes, Guy Montgomery, Gill Moore, Clive Offley, David Ransom, James Rowland, Sue Shaw, Wendy Slack, Kate Stott, Richard Swift, Dexter Tiranti, Troth Wells.

Editorial responsibility rests with the co-operative, whose purpose is to communicate development ideals through print and film to the widest possible audience.

SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES

Please write to your subscription office with full details including (if possible) your subscription number shown on the magazine address label. Please inform us of any change of address.

SUBSCRIPTION OFFICES AND ANNUAL PRICES

UK: 120-126 Lavender Ave, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3HP. Tel. (081) 685 0372.

Individuals £18.40 p.a.; £5.40 qtlly.

Institutions £35 p.a.

Canada: 1057 McNicoll Ave, Suite 108, Scarborough, Ontario M1W 3W6. Tel. (416) 496 8413.

Individuals 1 yr – \$30; 2 yrs – \$52; 3 yrs – \$74.

Overseas (by air) – \$45 p.a. Institutions \$50 p.a.

United States: PO Box 1143, Lewiston, NY 14092. Tel. (416) 496 8413.

Individuals 1 yr – \$30; 2 yrs – \$52; 3 yrs – \$74.

Overseas (by air) – \$45 p.a. Institutions \$50 p.a.

Australia and PNG: PO Box 82, Fitzroy, Victoria 3065. Tel. (03) 419 7111.

Individuals A\$37.50; Institutions A\$47.00.

Aotearoa (NZ): PO Box 1905, Christchurch.

Individuals \$37 Institutions \$43 (includes GST).

Rest of the World: 120 – 126 Lavender Ave, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3HP. Tel. (081) 685 0372.

Individuals £22; Institutions £40. Please pay in sterling by UK Cheque, Eurocheque, Visa, Mastercard or Bankers Draft. Despatch by air only.

EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING OFFICES

UK: 55 Rectory Road, Oxford OX4 1BW. Tel. (0865) 728181. Fax. (0865) 793152.

Canada: 1011 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario M6H 1M1. Tel. (416) 923 9857.

Australia: PO Box 82, Fitzroy, Victoria 3065. Tel. (03) 419 7111.

MAILINGS

Occasionally we agree to exchange our subscribers' names with organizations whose aims are broadly in line with our own. If you do not wish to receive their material please write to your subscription office.

Cover and UK inside pages printed by Andover Press Ltd., St. Ives Plc.

North American inside pages printed in Canada by Webcom, Scarborough, Ontario.

The NI is distributed to the UK news trade by AGB Impress, 22-26 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Tel. (071) 253 3456. Fax. (071) 608 0726.

The NI in North America (USPS 329-770) is published monthly by New Internationalist Publications, 175 Carlton Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5A 2K3. US 2nd class postage paid at Lewiston, NY. US Postmaster send address changes to: The NI, P O Box 1143, Lewiston, NY 14092. US Office of Publication, Lewiston, NY 14092. Registered with Alternative Press Index.

Reproduction of all material in NI, excluding photographs, is free for use by schools.

© New Internationalist Publications Ltd.



I've never really been certain. Oh I've got my convictions all right. But the kind of burning certainty you need if you are to tell others what's best for them has always escaped me. I tend towards seeing the complexity of the problem and wind up balancing the one side with the other.

I also find it difficult to carry on a conversation with someone who is always certain. Everything they say seems to have the weight of Luther's 95 theses nailed to the Wittenberg church door. Disagreement becomes heresy. I often get the sense from such people that if they let their certainty slip even slightly they would be buried by an avalanche of doubt. Fundamentalism is certainty writ large, certainty transformed from personal conviction into an entire system of belief.

This issue on fundamentalism tries to go beyond simply 'rounding up the usual suspects'. The holy roller and the ayatollah are after all pretty easy targets. It is more challenging to shine a light into some of the dark corners of our own house to ferret out our own absolute beliefs.

Tackling a topic like fundamentalism in such an idiosyncratic way leaves one open to having the charge turned on oneself. So I pondered the ways in which I am a fundamentalist myself and **NI** is tinged with this kind of belief and argument.

Those who know me will undoubtedly concur that my adherence to professional baseball and particularly the fate of the Montreal Expos is tinged with fanaticism. But I am attracted to a more serious form of absolute belief as well, which I think of as 'the politics of absolute refusal'. Here the idea is that we should just overthrow the whole oppressive mess – abandon our jobs, the restrictions of family life, the false gods of state and nation, the millions of oppressive little obligations and deceptions that stand in the way of true freedom.

Won't he ever grow up? I can hear you say. Ultimately of course it is impossible to live in this way. Still I think such a sweeping approach has the advantage of allowing one to stand back and honestly examine what matters and what doesn't. Fundamentalisms can be useful as long as you don't surrender to them.

But is the **NI** with all its naive earnestness fundamentalist? Again yes and no. We certainly tend towards the prescriptive, usually because we are keen to give people some hope and something useful to do rather than just drowning them in neg-

ative stories about what's wrong with the world. Sometimes it seems a bit pretentious – ten ways to stop global warming, or to feed the world. We do have a tendency to be a bit 'preachy'.

We don't have a consistent political position that we push, thanks in part to a system of rotating editors who often disagree vigorously. We have our sacred cows – grassroots Third World development (or grassroots almost anything else for that matter), feminism, anti-racism, environmentalism, etc. But it's okay to have firm ground on which to stand provided you are not blind to your own hypocrisies.

I think this is one of the reasons for doing an issue like this. It is not just an exposé of something you don't approve of but also encourages self-criticism. There might just be enough (I wouldn't want to be certain about it) to persuade those who share the **NI**'s perspective that fundamentalism is something that touches all of us – and not just people from rural Alabama or downtown Tehran.

Richard Swift
for the New Internationalist Co-operative

CONTENTS

NI No. 210

AUGUST 1990

FUNDAMENTALISM

Reaching for certainty 4

Richard Swift on the true believer's remedy for modern confusion and doubt.



BEYOND THE MACHINE GUN

Three writers dig beneath the surface image of Islam.

Hijacked by Khomeini 8

Sami Zubaidi looks at Islam's shrinking political options after the Ayatollah.

Passion for justice 9

Erica Simmons discovers the social roots of Islamic fundamentalism.

The Sufi soul 10

Islam does not equal violence. Akbar S Ahmed reveals a gentle side to Muslim devotion.

Market mullahs 12

The faithful of free enterprise say it's just common sense. Tom Walkom on the fundamentalist game-plan in economics.

Eco-apocalypics 14

The environmental movement has not escaped the obsessive posturing of the faithful. Brian Tokar reports.

Battle for Buddha 15

Mark Timm on Thailand's unlikely fundamentalism.

FUNDAMENTALISM – THE FACTS 16

The sword of God 18

Tom Barry weighs up the political impact of the new Protestant reformation that is sweeping Central America.



Facing the fire on high 19

Chris Brazier argues for a spiritual opposition to the fundamentalists.

Mesmerized by faith 20

The impulse to absolute belief is a powerful one. Jeremiah Creedon explores its dangers and attractions.

Simply... the fundamentals 22



Fundamentally female? 24

Women are attempting to recover the female essence in a male-dominated world. Celia Kitzinger thinks this is a blind alley for feminist politics.

Letters 2

Letter from La Paz 3

Update 26

Endpiece: Lydia Nompondwana's story 29

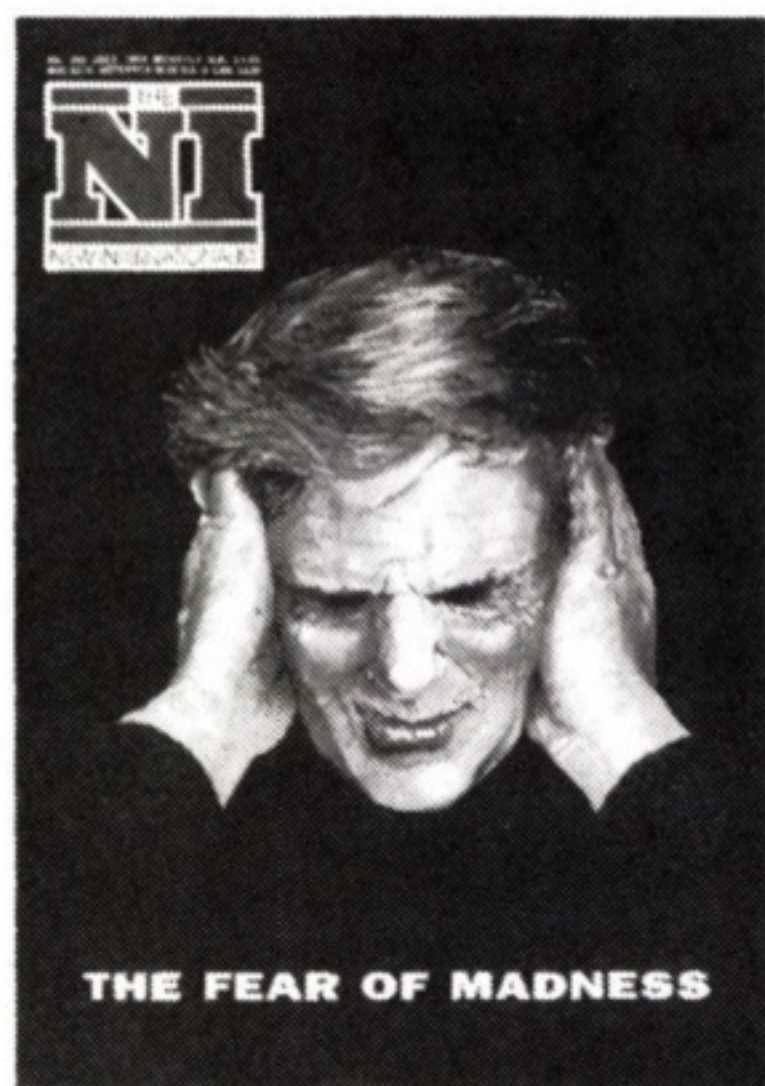
Reviews: Including Tomás Borge classic 30

Country profile: Peru 32

Cover photo: Steve McCurry/Magnum

Crazy silence

Why won't you let us speak for ourselves? Your issue on madness (NI 209) has plenty to say about us. You even allow what we say to be reported by others. But there's nothing but the story



by Bessie Head from people who know what they're talking about because they've been through it themselves. A bit ironic, this, when you rightly take everyone else to task for not wanting to listen.

So, despite what you say, the magazine reads like a commentary on madness aimed at people who think they're sane. If you'd listened to us you'd have heard more about anger and rights, less about fear and guilt. You might also have addressed the question of 'collective madness' – the 'bad' behaviour of societies that, as you say, is the single biggest cause of suffering in individuals. Then you would have got to grips with the real issues, the ones we can actually do something about. But you can't get there without us.

Jenny Saunders
Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK

God bless Africa

Nice try NI. Your magazine on Africa (*Burden of hope* NI 208) tried to find something positive to say about the only region of the world that is getting poorer. But wouldn't it have been better to spell out the real situation: to say that no-one is going to invest in black Africa any more after years of poor returns, especially now there's an

NI welcomes your letters. But please keep them short. They may be edited for purposes of space or clarity. Include a home telephone number if possible and send your letters to the nearest editorial office. The address is inside the front cover.

alluring market of aspiring white people opening up in Eastern Europe? All your 'merrie Africa' romanticism about 'peasants working together as they have always done' seems particularly ironic in the face of the rampant bloodletting in Natal, Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Sudan, Gabon, Liberia...

Africans are people like everyone else. Their 'initiative and resourcefulness' can be channelled into violence like everyone else's. Africa is doomed unless the West writes off its debts and lets Africans get on with their own lives. Western romanticism isn't going to help.

Jane Jones
Liverpool, UK

Final demand

Listening to the constant angst-ridden bleating of a bunch of white middle-class do-gooders has driven me over the edge. The Africa issue (*Burden of hope* NI 208) was the final straw. How dare you people tell Africans what they should do and how they should live? Cease publication tomorrow and leave real people to get on sorting out their own lives.

Paul Netu
Nairobi, Kenya

Better buy

I've just read the letter headed Repellent Recipe (*Letters* NI 208) and I recommend Veronica Garvin to read a book called Cheaper

and Better – Homemade alternatives to shop-bought products, by Nancy Birnes, published by Optima, 1988. It covers all sorts of recipes from health care to rainy-day fun for kids.

Heather Alblas
Chelmsford, UK

Spiritual healing

I was saddened to read your comments on New Age Music in the June edition (*Reviews* NI 208) and sadder still to see published such negative views on New Age Therapies and philosophy generally. As a theologian I have found such philosophies deeper, more rational and with the spiritual and emotional balance that Christianity is so desperately lacking. Although one could argue that people have to pay for them, in practice this is not unequivocally the case; people pay what they can and sometimes nothing at all.

Irene Thresher
Avon, UK

Happy housewife

The image of the 'trapped housewife... struggling with frustrated kids' and her own 'isolation and depression' has become an annoying cliché that bears no resemblance to the lives of the majority of women (*Letter from La Paz* NI 208). I live in a very friendly community with both working and non-working mothers and although I too will be starting work again soon, the last few

years spent at home with my children have been the happiest of my life. I have never 'shushed' my children on a bus or seen any other children being 'shushed'. My children are always smiled at in the street. And my neighbour rushes off to fetch a banana for my two boys whenever she sees them in the garden. Differences in child-rearing practices around the world is a fascinating subject, but to draw the conclusion that one society is child-loving and another not is an incredibly simplistic generalization.

Helen Zawada
Oxford, UK

Got the hump

I was delighted with your 1990 calendar until I found myself staring at a scene in which men were riding camels and beating the animals with long sticks. I do not think such a picture is in keeping with the spirit of your magazine – though come to think of it, you have never shown a great deal of sympathy for the other species we share this planet with.

OK, so the camels' faces do not express great pain or anguish, but then camels almost always look bored and expressionless. The men are obviously involved in a camel race, which, whatever the politically 'right-on' motivation for the event, involves unjustifiable maltreatment of camels. If evolution had meant us to have fun in this way our genitals would have been a different shape.

Tim Andrewes
Oxford, UK

Lumber logic

We were disappointed to read Teresa Apin's article in the *Update* section (NI 208). It is far too easy to assume that the effects of logging in South America are the same as those in Africa. In Ghana, for example, 95 per cent of the remaining high forest is in areas reserved for production and around which villages have existed for many decades. There are no 'landless settlers pouring into



the heart of the jungle' along logging roads in Ghana, and we have heard no reports of this happening elsewhere in West Africa.

Justine and Robert Dunn
Bristol, UK

Cool critic

Your issue on global warming (*How to turn down the heat* NI 206) gives a reasonable view of the subject and the solutions proposed. However the warming theory is still much disputed as is the assessment that global temperatures have increased at all since 1980. In spite of my rising dedication to conservation, last year I joined a growing number of sceptics in academic circles who are convinced that the warming theory is so exaggerated as to

be wrong, as is the theory that the hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica is caused by CFCs. No doubt all this paranoia over increased carbon dioxide and other gases has raised considerable environmental awareness, but at the expense of truth. Next century we will look back on the so-called greenhouse effect and ozone depletion as the most popular of false beliefs of the twentieth century.

R Preston
(Retired Meteorologist)
South Brisbane, Australia

Green panic

Many new diseases – like AIDS, Mad Cow Disease, Seal Distemper, Parvovirus of dogs and so on – have started emerging as a result of diseases which have long been

recognized in other species gaining the ability to infect a new host species. Meanwhile ecologists are worried about factors like increased levels of radio-activity, increased inorganic pollution and increased exposure to solar radiation as a result of high-altitude ozone depletion. These are all *mutating agents*. Is any political party studying the sort of measures that are necessary to stabilize the ecological balance? Intelligence cries out for consideration of alternatives should the crisis become indubitable.

Colin Dixon
Dunkeld, UK

Gratuitous insult

I expect NI to be provocative and I accept that my values may be challenged if not

changed by your publication – I would not have it any other way. But the cartoon in NI 204 (*Letters*) was the first time I have ever felt my values gratuitously insulted. Perhaps Canadian Roman Catholics are unusually sensitive given recent criminal investigations of the sexual misbehaviour of a minority of our officially celibate clergy but I fail to see the humour of implying that a religious vocation necessarily indicates an attachment to some minority sexual preference.

Danny Shea
Ontario, Canada



The views expressed on the letters pages are not necessarily those of the NI.

LETTER FROM LA PAZ

Thank you, Compadre Carlos

Susanna Rance explains how God and radio have given a whole new feel to popular politics in Bolivia.

RADIO Metropolitana and TV Channel 4 are both owned by Carlos Palenque, a former folk musician turned communicator and, more recently, politician. By presenting himself as Compadre or Father Carlos, he simulates the intimate, reciprocal relationship existing between parents and godparents in Andean culture. Palenque has built up his image not just as the friend, but almost as the relative of oppressed Aymara migrants to La Paz's shanty towns.

'We've just done a social study', proclaims the Compadre, opening his daily programme, the *People's Tribune*. 'We've found that many poor families can't pay for their children's school books, and we've chosen ten needy cases to come forward today and receive them as a gift. This poor mother, for example, abandoned by her husband with four children... ah, she does have a husband. Is he working, Señora? How much does he earn?'

Dona Irma's sobs resound on transistor sets all over the city. On realizing his radio guest speaks little Spanish, Palenque slips smoothly into fluent, city-twanged Aymara. His voice is masterly, reassuring, that of a man used to taking charge of other people's problems. The story comes out, the books are handed over, and after accepting weeping expressions of gratitude and a kiss from the child, Compadre Carlos turns to the next in the queue.

'The *People's Tribune* is open to the poor and needy', declares Palenque on his evening television spot, fixing the camera with his intense, super-sincere gaze. 'This is the voice

of the people, and the voice of the people is the voice of God.' Nodding assent beside him are the two women who complete his indomitable trio: Palenque's radiant wife, Compadre Monica; and the *Cholita Remedios*, a genuine representative of the people who wields the microphone in the wide skirts, shawl and bowler hat which mark Aymara women in La Paz.

Building on his tremendous popular support, Palenque entered the political arena barely seven months before the May 1989 general elections. He set himself up as the presidential candidate when the current governing party shut down his radio and TV stations after a candid live interview with drug king Roberto Suarez. 'They did us a big favour. If it hadn't been for that closure, we'd never have gone into politics,' says the Compadre triumphantly.

Palenque upset the apple cart for both left and right when his party, CONDEPA (Patriotic Conscience), came fourth in the general elections. Remedios Loza, now a CONDEPA deputy in the Bolivian parliament, explains the party's overnight success. 'People come to us to express their feelings and problems,' she says. 'If a woman is beaten by her husband and goes to the police, she has to have money if she wants fair treatment. But if she comes to Radio Metropolitana, she can get it all off her chest and find justice too, because the man's family and friends hear the programme and he's put to shame.'

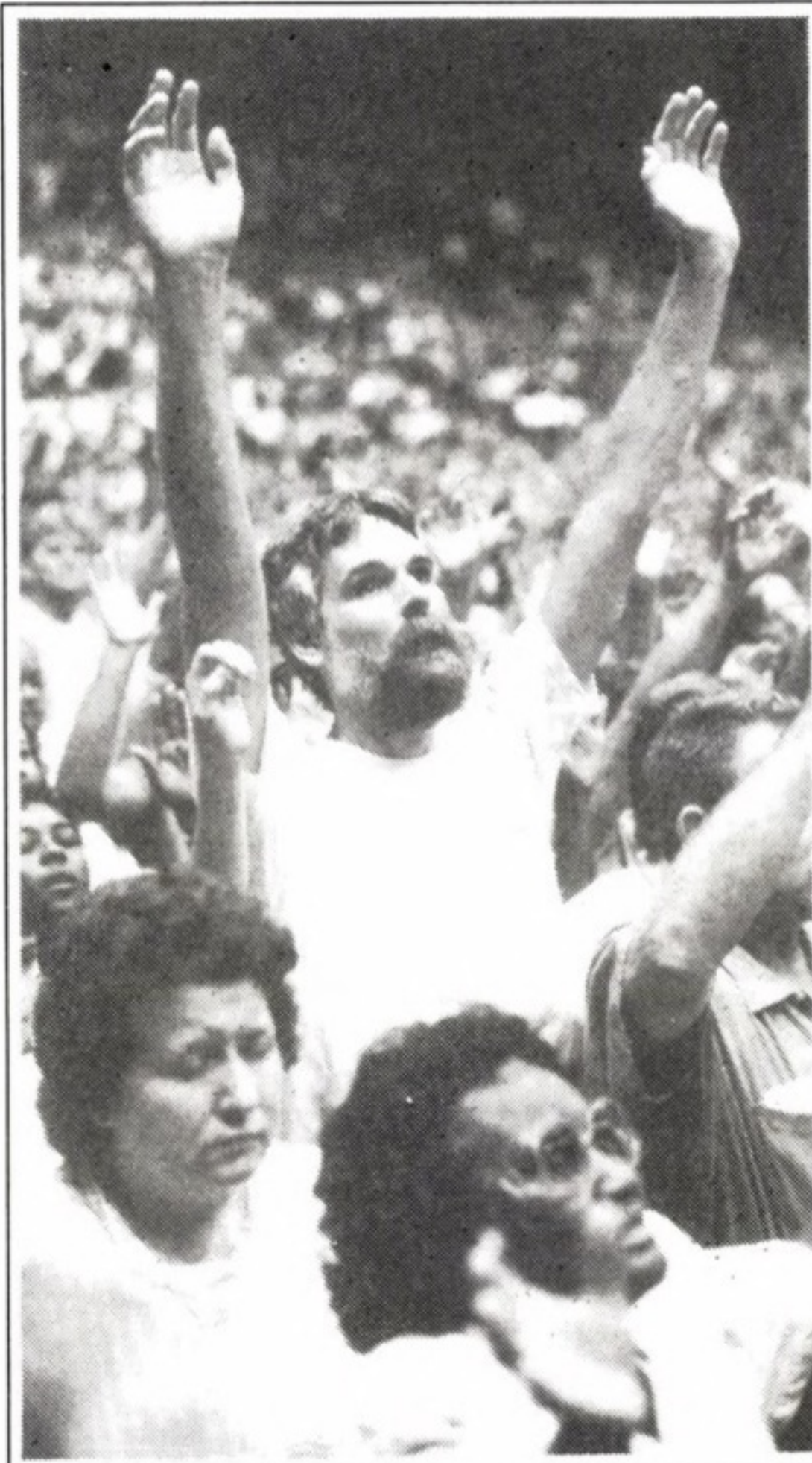
From the right, Palenque is criticized as an ignorant upstart who uses cheap tactics to buy popular votes. But like it or not, 'populism' is in vogue, and La Paz's poor traders, artisans and unemployed have little trouble identifying with a political leader who speaks their language, listens to their complaints and cares about their problems, whether they be squabbles with neighbours, lack of sewerage or corrupt local authorities. 'It's real life, isn't it?' muses Gregoria, a street sweeper, toddler on her back, broom and sack of trash by her side. 'Compadre Carlos talks about what happens to us. The others couldn't care. Why should we vote for them?'

Susanna Rance has lived and worked in Bolivia for several years.



Fundamentalism of all kinds is sweeping the globe. It makes Richard Swift nervous.

FUNDAMENTALISM REACHING FOR CERTAINTY



THE frenzied 'dance of the brokers' on a heavy trading day at the London stock exchange... an eager gathering of Bible Belt Pentecostals speaking in tongues to their Lord... the fervent worship of Kim Il Sung by neatly-scrubbed North Korean schoolchildren... the rhythmic chanting of the crowd at rallies to protest against heretical works like *The Last Temptation of Christ* or *The Satanic Verses*... hundreds of Moonie couples on the floor of Madison Square Gardens having their wedding vows blessed by their main man – the Reverend Moon himself.

All of these scenes evoke a similar sense of unease. This is the world of the fundamentalist – whether Allah or the Dollar is being worshipped and whether the lesson for the day is drawn from the Old Testament or the Little Red Book. You might be looking at the shiny face of a recently-graduated Master of Business Administration in downtown Montreal, at the ageing countenance of a Hare Krishna in Melbourne or at that of a hardened member of the local Komiteh militia unit in South Tehran. In any case the fundamentalist has no doubts and wants to clear up any of yours. Politely if possible, but if not...

The fundamentalist is by and large a reactionary but not a conservative in any traditional meaning of the word. A conservative wants to conserve what is: be it the existing system of privileges, a set of political boundaries or a local neighbour-

hood or forest. While fundamentalists venerate the authority and wisdom of the past, it is a past already lost under the assaults of the modern world. Their program is to regain this lost past. The present state of affairs must be entirely overturned to achieve their aims. They use the vocabulary of revolution but hark back to a mythical golden age that must be recovered in order to set things right.

Each set of absolute believers has its own version. It could be: a pure state of primitive communism; life as it was lived under the Prophet Muhammad – or at least the four 'right-thinking caliphs' who followed him; the racial purity of the Teutonic forests; the 'natural' system of punishments and rewards bestowed by a

completely unfettered marketplace; inner peace and tranquillity – the list is almost endless.

Fundamentalism is a mindset that can affect almost any belief system. In this sense it is not strictly religious but encompasses secular forms of absolute belief. No matter what you believe you can fall prey to fundamentalist temptation. Any obsessive preoccupation with a single explanation of the cosmos or a single 'answer' to the problems of society can slip easily into fundamentalist belief. An absolute faith in science, for instance, can lead one into donning technocratic blinkers that easily match religious dogma for wilful narrow-mindedness.

A modern phenomenon

Fundamentalism is not, however, simply the same as extreme opinion. Movements of religious revival and social orthodoxy have erupted throughout human history. But they usually arise in defence of an existing and unquestioned truth rather than as deeply-estranged reactions to an era where no one knows what to believe any more. Fundamentalism reasserts an old truth as the answer to modern doubt. It is thus a byproduct of the modern age.

Christian (largely Protestant) fundamentalism grew up in the US at the turn of the century. The Judaic version has only surfaced in the last 50 years while Islamic fundamentalism dates from just before World War Two and has only really got going in the last 20 years. Secular

fundamentalisms are just as new – the Marxist variant dates from Stalin's day, those of the racist right from after World War One and messianic capitalism from the Reagan and Thatcher revolutions of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The recent arrival of fundamentalism – whether it dons a three-piece suit or a *chador* – is rooted in the failed promise of modernity. Our era is one where God has been superseded by a gospel of technical progress and economic growth. This process – known broadly as modernization – has a 'natural' feel, an inevitability to it, that is immune from all but minor tinkering by mere mortals.

But it is also very confusing. The pace of change in this century has been dizzying, with traditional habits, beliefs and cultures under constant pressure to adapt. In an increasingly materialist world our individual worth is measured according to standards of wealth and power. We no longer seem to belong anywhere. Old neighbourhoods are disappearing. Government is increasingly large and remote. Growing rates of divorce and family violence have put traditional home life in question. The increasingly global economy means our livelihoods can be undermined by the keystroke of a computer in Brussels or Tokyo.

Cultural and economic confusion provide fertile ground for the growth of fundamentalism. Who would not want a return to certainty in an uncertain world? The inner peace offered by the Reverend Moon or other cultic hucksters sounds pretty appealing in the pressure-cooker of modern life. The key is to re-establish the old ways: the intimate gathering around the family hearth; a clear sense of what is right (and will be rewarded) and what is wrong (and will be punished); belief in something bigger than ourselves.

Sounds quite reasonable. But did it ever really exist? And if it ever did, didn't it contain the seeds of its own destruction? If idyllic family life, hard work and god-fearing morality were all we ever wanted – why did we ever leave this Garden of Eden? The seeds of discontent that have grown and flowered into the modern world must have been planted in that garden.

Nevertheless fundamentalists are not only harking back to a golden age – they are also obsessed by the idea that we are heading towards an apocalyptic crisis if we don't mend our ways. This is referred to most graphically by Christian fundamentalists as the second coming of Christ known as 'endtimes'. But it takes other forms, too: the collapse of capitalism, a debt crisis due to lax welfarism, a race war, generalized environmental catastrophe – take your pick.

Each movement aims to put things right with a total program of rigorous moral reform enforced on unbelievers by a government of the 'chosen'. Because the fundamentalist impulse is rooted in insecurity is preoccupied with exorcising

its devils by laying down chapter and verse (whether drawn from the Bible or *Das Kapital*) as to how life should be lived. It is immensely difficult to enforce a static code of conduct – especially if it derives from another historical era. But this doesn't seem to faze the true believer. The Ayatollah Khomeini's *Explication of Problems* contains more than 3,000 rulings on the conduct of daily life: everything from laws of inheritance to matters of personal cleanliness and how to slaughter animals.

Pat Robertson, the TV evangelist and US presidential candidate, is another uncompromising authoritarian. 'When the Christian majority takes over this country,' he proclaimed, 'there will be no satanic churches, no more free distribution of pornography, no more abortion on demand and no more talk of rights for homosexuals. After the Christian majority takes control, pluralism will be seen as immoral and evil and the state will not permit anybody to practise it.'

A worldwide surge

The present surge of fundamentalism that is sweeping through political cultures all over the world must not be underestimated. There are some 60 million born-again Christians in the US who provided the core of Robertson's ill-fated presidential campaign in 1988. Latin America has become a veritable playground for US evangelical organizations as an estimated 400 Catholics every hour make the switch to right-wing Protestantism. From Morocco to Malaysia Islamic fundamentalism has thrown the fear of Allah into traditional political elites. The militant Right, at least the brand that advocates draconian free-market prescriptions, has gone a long way towards dismantling the welfare state and mixed economy in Western countries.

Other right-wing true believers are reviving once-discredited theories of race as a total explanation for all social ills, and gaining support by targeting the non-white and Jewish populations of Europe.



Faith on fire: outraged British Muslims burn Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. The fundamentalist reveres some books as sacred, and destroys others as blasphemous.

Photo: Gary Clarkson

Communal tensions in India and Sri Lanka have been significantly exasperated by a rise in Hindu and Buddhist fundamentalist chauvinism. Only on the Marxist-Leninist Left are the faithful in disarray, with none but the gerontocracy that runs China and zealots like the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and Sendero Luminoso in Peru standing firm against the winds of revisionism.

Roots of faith

It would be a mistake to see fundamentalism as an entirely negative phenomenon. For a start it usually addresses real issues, albeit in an obsessive and partial way.

Also many fundamentalists, particularly Islamic ones, have suffered for their beliefs. The Assad government in Syria massacred some 10,000 in the 1970s. Real idealism animates fundamentalist belief. There were elements of Christian fundamentalism in the nineteenth-century movement for the abolition of slavery. Islamic fundamentalism is fiercely egalitarian, rooted in dismay at the corruption and despotism of post-colonial Muslim societies. And it is quite possible to make the case that Iran's Islamic Republic is preferable to the ruthless officer class that runs Iraq and Syria. We should avoid being too quick in judging those who profess absolute faith elsewhere without looking for it in our own backyards, even in our own minds.

Fundamentalism is also a question of degree. It is when out of power that absolute faith is most ardent. Once in power a fundamentalist movement is in a position to do more harm but the realities of government (fear of popular revolt and the desire to reward its constituency) lead it into selective tolerance and departures from principle. A rigorous belief in the free market with its 'everyone paying their way' creed is often tempered by tax deferments for corporations or other welfare-for-the-rich schemes. The Saudi royal family enforces a fairly strict Islamic regime on its subjects but is notorious for its own moral licence.

Some see departures from principle as evidence of the underlying hypocrisy of the fundamentalists. Sexual misconduct and fraud by US TV evangelists are often seen like this. But it is far better to question the puritanical standards that such people uphold but cannot live up to themselves. Instead of blaming Baton Rouge holy roller Jimmy Swaggart for his voyeuristic adventures with a New Orleans prostitute, we should reject the kind of explanation that says 'the devil made me do it' and counterpose a more practical and liberated approach to sexuality. The lapses of fundamentalists when they reach power or public eminence are tacit acknowledgements that their expectations are out of line with reality. The problem is not Jimmy Swaggart's deceit but his dogma.

The fundamentalist confuses her or his

own faith with power. Their belief is not a private matter. It has no meaning if its directives cannot be imposed on others. Faith is vested in charismatic leaders (usually but not always male) who are given the right to interpret and enforce doctrine. The implications are profoundly undemocratic but effective in achieving the obsessive goals fundamentalists set for themselves. The thousands of bizarre religious cults mobilize their members' time, energy and money while providing only minimal room and board to the faithful. In this way Elizabeth Clare Prophet, leader of the Church Universal and Triumphant in Paradise Valley, Montana, can count on absolute obedience from her 'flock' in the central task of building a complex of air-raid shelters so that church members will survive World War Three.

Where opposition to messianic leadership exists it is cowed or eliminated. The new Islamic dictatorship in Sudan ensures absolute obedience to its program of Islamization by executing or imprisoning opponents and banning political parties, trade unions and the non-Islamic press. In more democratic contexts fundamentalism becomes a question of arrogant political style (such as those of Thatcher and Reagan), always of course with the CS gas and the riot squads of the national-security state to fall back on if necessary.

The passion and simplicity of fundamentalism is what gives it its strength. Those who hold a messianic faith in capitalism are often the most skilled in translating what is at core an arbitrary and extremist doctrine into everyday common sense. According to Margaret Thatcher: 'My policies are based not on some economic theory but on things I and millions like me were brought up with: an honest day's pay; live within your means; put by a nest egg for a rainy day; pay your bills on time; support the police.'

The way to resist

The temptation for those opposed to fundamentalism is to try and replicate the fundamentalist's appeal in order to compete. This is where one-dimensional argument and crude simplifications creep into feminist, green and other oppositional thinking. Here our politics is easily reduced to apocalyptic nightmares and simple-minded finger-pointing rather than the coherent presentation of alternatives. While we need a politics that appeals to the emotions and the spirit it must avoid trading in the currency of fundamentalism.

We should instead be exploiting the inherent weaknesses of fundamentalism – its sectarianism, for example. It is very hard for fundamentalists to get along with one another, let alone anybody else. Most Muslim countries have several competing currents of fundamentalist thought. Sectarianism on the Left comes close to self-parody. Evangelical Christians aren't exactly known for their ecumenical generosity towards other churches. The obses-

sive fundamentalist belief in 'one solution' makes minorities who value their distinctiveness very suspicious. And despite a commonly-held puritanical creed and intolerance for dissent it is impossible to imagine the different types of fundamentalists coming together to make common cause. Jerry Falwell and Hezbollah? Or maybe Dan Quayle and Sendero Luminoso?

Fundamentalism touches a powerful inner need in many of us – even if we aren't willing to surrender. But there is a side to the human personality that it doesn't reach at all – the side that contains our laughter, our sense of play, our sensuality, our curiosity about the world. Fundamentalism is all a bit dour – in short, not too much fun. It doesn't want people to express the generous side of themselves, the side that identifies with the plight of others even if they are unbelievers and sinners.

Many ways, many roads

By putting boundaries on thought it tries to forbid the inquisitiveness of the storyteller and the scholar, so necessary in exploring an idea no matter where it may lead. By its mirthless authoritarianism it fails to appreciate that nothing in this life is or should be beyond the prick of humour. And because personality and politics have a tendency to spill over into one another it wants to take these things away from the rest of us.

If we reject fundamentalism we must do so with a politics that allows room for our humour and imagination. A libertarian approach to society that upholds common human rights but also values diversity could be the best way of going about this. In the place of a failed modernity we must put not 'the way' and 'the road' but many ways and many roads: different ways of working and organizing economies, different designs for community and public life, different kinds of caring and loving – in short, different ways of living.

We must look at each situation with a fresh gaze that allows us to make a better start if this is necessary – more appropriate technologies, different sources of energy, more creative ways of organizing democracy and human government so that we no longer feel so helpless. To do this we should borrow shamelessly from the past without being imprisoned by it. We need a vision that has passion and doesn't fear the spiritual yet allows space for individual and collective difference. It must value the iconoclastic, the eccentric, the deviant, the heretical, in the face of a fundamentalism that wants to mould everything into a dull sameness.

Those who want to resist the conformity of fundamentalism must do so with a politics that has the flexibility to listen to many voices – and yet speaks clearly enough to be heard over the shouts of the faithful. □



FUNDAMENTALIST faith is based on close adherence to the Word taken from the Book. The Word is spread by the passion of believers who offer a total explanation of the world to the confused and alienated. Conviction is not just a question of belief but a whole program to put things right. Sinners must be made to accept the Word and repent. Faith *for* quickly becomes faith *against*.

Photos from top left clockwise : Rachad El Koussy/Camera Press; Cornel Capa/Magnum; Ricky Flores/Impact; Andrew Moore/Reflex

BEYOND THE MACHINE GUN

Not all Muslims are fundamentalist. Three writers dig deeper to explore the struggle within Islam.

IN the past two decades Islamic fundamentalists have stepped out onto the international stage with a dramatic flourish. They have been authors (or at least seen to be authors) of the Iranian Revolution, of hostage taking in Lebanon, of demonstrations and riots in Egypt and North Africa, and now of the *Satanic Verses* affair on our very doorsteps.

The direction of these activities against the West has ensured an avalanche of superficial news coverage, reinforcing popular stereotypes of a seemingly unified, fanatic and hostile Islam. But what is lost in this cacophony of coverage is that these widely diverse events constitute but one particular and quite new direction for *political* Islam. Religion has played a variety of roles in modern Islamic history, mostly quite different from its role in the relatively recent rise of fundamentalism.

The great majority of Muslims aren't political at all. Their religion consists of daily and seasonal observances, with various degrees of piety and devotion from orthodox prayers and recitations to mystical exercises. Some of these 'private' Muslims may be mobilized politically around issues which are supposed to offend against the basic tenets of religion. The Rushdie affair is a case in point.

Most of the *ulama* (Muslim clerics) avoid political involvement. Militant political clerics like Khomeini are the exception rather than the rule. In many countries, notably Egypt, *ulama* are employed by state institutions and are careful not to offend. On some occasions they are called to bestow religious approval on government policies and normally oblige. Sadat's accord with Israel, strongly opposed by many Egyptians, was duly sanctioned by establishment *ulama*.

All the same, Islamic ideas and movements have played a very important part in the modern history of the Middle East. They have represented diverse trends, mostly very different from the modern stereotype of 'fundamentalists'. What they all have in common is the objective of reforming corrupt government and society as well as the corruptions of their own religion. They have all tried to grapple with the backwardness and corruption associated with Western imperial domination. But they often drew intellectual sustenance from European cultural and political ideas and models in seeking a workable and culturally authentic synthesis. It is only in recent times that total rejection of all things Western in the name of Islamic purity and authenticity has become the dominant current of Muslim political thought.

The revolution in Iran is the most important single event in shaping Islamic politics in the region. Ostensibly it was

Hijacked by Khomeini

The victory of fundamentalism in Iran brought to a close a fertile debate on the relationship of religion to politics in the Muslim world. Sami Zubeida explains.

the work of fundamentalist clerics leading the religious masses against a Westernizing government. This is a simplistic picture. The social forces behind the Revolution were diverse, drawing heavily on the secular intelligentsia. Many of the most important Islamic groups were



motivated by ideas very different from those of Khomeini and the clerics.

The main such group was the left-wing Islamic People's Mojahedin. Their ideology was influenced by the teachings of a prominent French-educated intellectual, Ali Shariati, who died in 1977. Their ideas drew heavily on modern revolutionary thought: a mixture of neo-Marxism, the populist insurrectionism of Che Guevara and Franz Fanon's work on the psychology and culture of liberation.

They believed in a God that had created a world rooted in a class conflict between the oppressors and the oppressed that went all the way back to Cain and Abel. The Prophet of Islam was sent to champion the oppressed and to abolish the systems of slavery and exploitation. After Muhammad's death, his religion was subverted by rich merchants and warlords. Shi'ism, like Sunnism, was appropriated and subverted by ruling classes aided by clerics. For the Mojahedin it was up to the revolutionary intelligentsia to enlighten and lead the masses, using their cultural heritage of struggle and martyrdom.

This revolutionary socialism in a Third World mould (with a stress on cultural authenticity thrown in) was the leading Islamic ideology of the Revolution. Khomeini's own theory, which justifies clerical rule (equally novel in the history of Islam), was not revealed till after the Revolution. Secular and non-clerical Islamic forces acquiesced in Khomeini's leadership because he spoke the rhetoric of radical populism: an Islamic Republic which would favour the oppressed against local tyrants and US imperialism. The militant clerics were in a position to hijack the Revolution because they were the only group with organization, practical strategy and money. The Mojahedin were among their early victims.

This hijack by militant clerics has had an impact well beyond Iran's borders. Egypt, for instance, provides an entirely different model of Islamic involvement in political life. It has witnessed nearly two centuries of secular government, but with important movements of Islamic reform. The key figure was that of Muhammad Abduh, a religious scholar and reformer with extensive knowledge of contemporary European thought. He aimed at religious and social reform which would bring the Islamic lands out of their backwardness and subservience to Europe. His reformist ideas were similar to European models of constitutionalism and democracy, which he argued went back to the early Islam of the Prophet and his community. He laid the intellectual basis for a liberal Islam which inspired Arab nationalist leaders striving for independence.

This liberal Islam had to contend with

the fundamentalist trends of the Muslim Brotherhood (founded in 1928), which rejected all 'imported' political models, insisting that 'The Qu'ran is our constitution'. But the Brotherhood, though an important political force, was only one of many Islamic currents (liberal and even socialist) in a secular Egypt. Events in Iran have given Egypt's fundamentalist groups immeasurably more power.

The revolution in Iran sparked the growth of militant fundamentalism throughout the Muslim world. On the surface it demonstrated the power of the Islamic masses to topple a corrupt US-

dominated government. Vast numbers of educated and semi-educated youth throughout the Muslim world face the grim prospect of unemployment or dead-end jobs. Privileged elites monopolize opportunities and resources. Governments rule in the name of a tainted nationalism or socialism and are too often corrupt. Meanwhile Israel and its Western backers remain ascendant while Arab governments appear either helpless or indifferent. Pent-up personal and national frustrations are finding an outlet in identification with Islam.

At present all of these factors make

Islamic fundamentalism a virtually unstoppable force. Only in Iran itself are there signs of the intelligentsia realizing that Islamic government is a recipe for unlimited and unenlightened despotism which only aggravates social and economic problems. It may be that the other countries of the Muslim world will have to go through a similar experience in order to move beyond fundamentalism. □

Sami Zubeida lectures at Birkbeck College in the University of London.

BEYOND THE MACHINE GUN



The electronic devil – Muslim fundamentalists find it hard to limit modern influences.

FOR many in the West the term 'Muslim' conjures up images of wild-eyed, khaffiya-clad young men brandishing machine guns. But while angry young men are part of fundamentalist Islam, they are not the whole story. Fundamentalism is more broadly based than the media dares mention and there is a good deal more to this politicized Islam than fury with the West. Islam has become the rallying cry for the poor and alienated throughout the Arab world and is today the main voice of opposition to corrupt and repressive regimes.

Like their Christian counterparts, Muslim fundamentalists want to return to the roots of faith. What distinguishes Muslims is their belief that Islam provides the prescription for an ideal state. It is not enough for individuals to be observant – government, economy and society at large must all be based on Islamic principles.

Because of its origins as the religion of an empire, political theory is built into Muslim theology. 'Politics... is the great role of Islam,' wrote the Ayatollah Khomeini in his will. 'The holy Qu'ran and the sayings of God's Prophet ... have more commands about government and politics than about anything else.'

Even the greatest religious schism in Islam, that between Sunnis and Shi'ites, was in essence a political dispute over

A passion for justice

Erica Simmons believes that to understand Islamic fundamentalism we need to see why it appeals to the poor.

who would succeed the Prophet Muhammad as Caliph after his death in 632. The losers of this battle were the partisans or 'shia' of Ali, the son-in-law of Muhammad. Shi'ites make up about 10 per cent of the world's Muslim population and are in the majority only in Iran, Iraq and Bahrain. The greater radicalism of the Shi'ites stems in large part from their history as opponents of the Sunni establishment and their consequent status as a beleaguered minority within Islam.

Whether Sunni or Shi'ite, fundamentalists believe that an Islamic revival is the only way to solve the severe poverty and exploitation that are the legacy of European colonization. For the fundamentalists post-colonial governments based on imported ideologies like nationalism, secularism, liberalism and socialism just per-

petuate Western domination and fail to bring either prosperity or social equality.

Islamic fundamentalism is as much a social as a religious phenomenon. Fundamentalists earn much of their credibility through their success in meeting people's needs. The activists we hear about now are not a new breed. They are a radicalized version of groups like the Muslim Brotherhood, which was established in Egypt in 1928 and is still an active force in many parts of the Arab world. The Brotherhood became the largest mass movement in Egyptian history by providing health clinics, jobs, education and cultural self-respect as it worked to integrate uprooted peasants into urban life.

In Egypt today the mainstream of the fundamentalist movement continues to provide schools, banks and other social services. These are, of course, Islamic schools, Islamic banks and Islamic social services based on traditional Islamic law (Shari'a) and custom. By these means, rather than through political confrontation, the fundamentalists are winning support for Islamicization among the poor and disenfranchised. The fundamentalists are highly organized, well financed by the oil money of states like Saudi Arabia, and this allows them to create an institutional structure parallel to the state.

Along with their social program, the fundamentalists act as a pressure group concerned with upgrading standards of public morality. In place of Western-style permissiveness and materialism, they offer a return to the *umma*, or 'community of believers', where the interests of the individual are balanced with the welfare of all. They believe a society based on traditional Islamic values will be just, compassionate, strong and prosperous. The poor are attracted to fundamentalism's respect for tradition combined with social activism while middle-class Muslims, especially students, are drawn to the movement's utopian idealism.

This combination of social activism and an appeal to indigenous cultural values is what gives fundamentalism such strength as a mobilizing ideology in the Muslim world. Like the liberation theologians in Latin America, Muslim fundamentalists wed religion to a political

program. They hold that an Islamic revival will bring social regeneration, egalitarianism and liberation from Western domination. To the extent they are allowed to operate freely, the fundamentalists deliver on many of their promises.

Given the scope of their aims and the range of their activity, it is easy to see why many Arab governments are fearful of the growing strength of fundamentalism. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat took a conciliatory approach in his efforts to ward off a fundamentalist revolution. He allowed a referendum in 1980 which made the Shari'a the main source of legislation, although few of the hotly-debated bills based on it actually became law. Sadat's lukewarm commitment to Islamicization and his peace treaty with Israel radicalized many fundamentalists and new extremist groups emerged. It was one of these groups, Al-Jihad, which finally assassinated Sadat in 1981.

In 1982, Syrian President Hafez Assad felt threatened enough by the possibility of a Muslim Brotherhood-led armed insurrection to massacre at least 10,000 people in the city of Hama. In most of the Arab world today, radical fundamentalist organizations, no matter how large their following, are suppressed or outlawed.

Muslim fundamentalists are divided not only by the willingness of some to use violence to achieve their aims, but also by their definition of Islam. Most want to

their own words...

'An Islamic regime must be serious in every aspect of life. There can be no fun and enjoyment in whatever is serious.'

AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI

revive a form of Islam which is uncorrupted by contact with the West. For the purists, this means Islam as it existed during the time of the Prophet Muhammad – from 570 to 632. Other fundamentalists point to the medieval period, called the 'golden age of Islam', as the best historical example of fully Islamic society. Other Muslims argue that Islam has never been static, but has evolved continually over the centuries, so that there is no truly 'correct' version of Islam which can be revived.

Fundamentalist solutions to historical and political problems are far from homogenous. In Indonesia, fundamentalist women ride motor scooters; in Saudi Arabia, they are not even allowed to drive cars. In both countries, however, women continue to study in universities and enter the professions. In Iran, the one country which has had its fundamentalist Islamic revolution, Western-style legal procedures are used to enforce the Shari'a and the *ulama*, or Muslim clerics, act as advisors to an elected parliament. The

Shari'a has been described as the 'motor force' of Islamic politics and is the crucial underpinning of all efforts at Islamicization. Fundamentalists of all stripes see the reinstitution of the Shari'a as the key to social harmony and the more radical among them consider it the only acceptable basis for political authority. The governmental role of the Iranian *ulama* derives from their status as those best able to interpret the Shari'a.

In the non-Islamic world we hear mostly about the more punitive and puritanical side of the Shari'a – whippings and amputations, together with bans on alcohol, gambling and other Western-style entertainments. Yet the consistent application of these punishments is a rare event. Many women with aspirations to full equality object to the reimposition of the Shari'a. This is one sign of the enormous difficulties involved in bringing an old religion to terms with modern society. The strength of fundamentalism lies in its use of historically anchored cultural values. But for its critics this is also one of its great weaknesses, and fundamentalism is often charged with being nostalgic and archaic. If the fundamentalist revolution is to succeed without resorting to violence, it will have to satisfy such critics. □

Erica Simmons is a Canadian freelance journalist with a special interest in Middle Eastern politics.

BEYOND THE MACHINE GUN

WESTERN stereotypes of Islam aren't particularly subtle. The 'kill a Muslim for Christmas' that greeted me in the London underground catches the flavour. Muslim leaders, hated and despised, are reduced to Walt Disney villains: 'Kho Maniac, Wacky Kaddafi, Yucky Arafat'; these are 'garbage pail adults' according to the US humour magazine *MAD*. The repugnance is contagious. Even the staid London *Economist* is not immune: Imam Khomeini was 'Savonarola' and Colonel Gaddafi 'the Devil's godfather' on its covers. The colours, red and black, were striking and indicated hell: both men appeared minatory and forbidding.

But not all Muslims can be categorized as intent on mayhem. Take the Sufis. Sufism is universalist and humanist Islam striving for spiritual purity. The foundations of Sufism are love and peace, *sulh-i-kul*, peace with all. The Prophet's life provides inspiration to the Sufis – his clothes of wool, *suf*, give them their name. The gentleness, contemplative solitude and universal tolerance of the Sufis trace to him. Their spiritual genealogy is thus impeccable, Sufism is the endearing – and enduring – side of Islam.

The Sufis, through the key concept of *fana* – negation of self, annihilation – devoted themselves to Islam. In the rejection of the world the Sufi was gaining it;

The Sufi soul

Westerners hooked on a simple-minded view of Muslim fanaticism should visit the gentle, forgiving Sufis, argues Akbar S Ahmed.

the Prophet had said, 'what have I to do with this world?' Moderation was made respectable; austerity desirable.

The poor and the dispossessed could thus identify with Sufi values. The Sufi became, willy-nilly, a rebel figure making the establishment nervous and uneasy. Salvation lay in rejection; success in the extent of rejecting the world. A paradox thus emerged. The greater the rejection of the world the greater the success of the Sufi in the eyes of society. The idea was old. 'Having the fewest wants, I am nearest to the gods,' Socrates had said.

For those people who feel the rage and see hate and anger in Muslim society a visit to a Sufi shrine would be instructive. They would witness calm, peace and love; perhaps even a touch of magic, the live practice of *sulh-i-kul* demonstrated. At the shrine of Muin-al-Din Chisti, for example, in the Indian city of Ajmer, there is a real air of wonder, of miraculous possibilities.

Magic, tolerance and devotional poetry

lay at the heart of Sufi practice in India. This explains the appeal of Sufism to the majority Hindu population. The poor, the dispossessed, those in need, regardless of caste and religion, came to the Sufi shrines to find solace.

Sufi Islam conquers hearts through love. Its very existence should make Westerners think twice about reducing the world's billion Muslims to media stereotypes.

Professor Akbar S Ahmed is Fellow of Selwyn College, Cambridge. His latest book is *Discovering Islam: Making Sense of Muslim History and Society*.

A FORGIVING CREED

The great Sufi saint Abd al-Qadir Jilani (1077-1166) saw the following as the ten basic tenets of human behaviour:

1. Never swear by God.
2. Never speak an untruth even in jest.
3. Never break a promise.
4. Never curse anyone.
5. Never harm anyone.
6. Never accuse anyone of religious infidelity.
7. Never be a party to anything sinful.
8. Never impose a burden on others.
9. Never accept anything from human beings – God alone is the giver.
10. Look for in others the good points and not the bad.

Oliver Nixon needs your help.



Photos : Associated Press and Camera Press

FOR years Oliver Nixon has been a selfless fighter in the Cold War. He has stood for military preparedness and national vigilance against the Communist menace. He has been there when the peaceniks and their defeatist message have tried to sap the national will. He has stood firm against the bleeding-heart liberals with their calls for increased welfare spending. He has exposed the penetration of the Reds into our churches and universities... the machinations of the United Nations... the calls for aid to pinko Third World governments... the fraud of perestroika.

But now Oliver Nixon, the man who stood by you in all those dark days, is undergoing a personal and financial crisis of his own. It was bad enough when the Berlin Wall came down. Then everybody started holding elections and leaving the Warsaw Pact. Even the Sandinistas aren't there to kick around any more. Now people just smile indulgently when Oliver warns against deep cuts in the military budget. His phone has stopped ringing. No more calls from the big networks for him to appear as an 'expert' on the daily news. No more invitations to learned seminars so Oliver could give his famous speech on the decline of the West. Even his contract with the Strategic Studies Center is under review as the Center worries about its own funding.

NO LAUGHING MATTER

To be honest Oliver is depressed. The cheerful grin that we all know and love from the TV is no longer there. Oliver thought the the Cold War would go on for ever and he is having a lot of problems adjusting. The big house in Arlington is mortgaged to the hilt. The kids' tuition fees at the Virginia Christian Seminary are overdue. The credit-card limits have all been reached. His ex-wife's lawyer keeps calling about the six months' back alimony.

A NATIONAL TRAGEDY

And Oliver is not alone. There are hundreds of true-blue patriotic citizens just like him. The cream of the country. Former admirals and generals. The corporate statesmen who run the arms industry. Presidential advisors and past Secretaries of State as well as a plethora of academics, pollsters, fundraisers, preachers, spin-doctors and consultants whose stock in trade has been the Cold War.

The Peace Through Strength Foundation exists to help these courageous freedom-fighters in their hour of need.

● Just \$35 from you would ensure that Oliver could still enjoy a three-martini lunch at his club.

● Just \$100 can provide an invaluable 15 minutes of psychotherapy to help Oliver adjust to the new realities.

● Just \$500 will pay the monthly fees for the whole family at the suburban Crimefight pistol range.

● Just \$1000 from five concerned citizens can help meet payments on the new cabin cruiser.

● And a gift of \$100,000 will help Oliver get back on his feet by attending the special Peace Through Strength career-retraining school. We offer some exciting new career paths such as the War on Drugs, International Terrorism and our new course on Defence of the Free Market.

***Oliver made sacrifices for you.
Show him your gratitude by
digging deep.***

**Help a Cold War
Fundamentalist over a
bad patch!**

PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH
FOUNDATION



NAME

ADDRESS

.....

.....

OPEN the business pages of the newspaper. Listen to the television news. Chances are someone is talking about the 'economic fundamentals we can no longer ignore'. Chances are someone is talking about 'economic reality' or 'facing hard economic facts.'

What they really mean, these economists and bond traders and politicians, is that the rich should have more and the poor should quit complaining. Those are the 'facts' to be faced.

In a normal world, such people would be ignored. In a normal world, normal people would look at the UK's Margaret Thatcher on television talking about the virtue of joblessness or Canada's Brian Mulroney speaking of the importance of high interest rates and say they were nuts. In a normal world, the Thatchers and Mulroneys would be voted out of office. That they are not says much for the influence of the believers.

The believers have nothing to do with Islam or Christianity. Their belief is in the power of money. They call this belief economics, or sometimes 'common sense'. They call themselves economists, or sometimes 'practical people'. Economists became important in the West only after the Second World War. In retrospect, it seems, things were golden then. Unemployment was down, wages were up. In those days, the rage was technocracy, the heroes managers. Isaac Asimov's science-fiction masterpiece, the Foundation Trilogy, exemplified the post-war world. Hari Seldon, a scientist using modern methods, is able to predict mass human behavior for centuries beyond. Better yet, he is able to control that behavior even after death.

Asimov's Seldon should have been an economist. They were the real managers in the post-war world. Secular, urbane, they gave each other awards and – from the towers of government – fine-tuned the social machine. In a world that valued science, economists transformed themselves into scientists. They used mathematics, the language of pure science. They performed calculus. They were the keepers of esoteric knowledge, able to communicate only with one another.

That no one else understood them did not matter. They were the experts, the Hari Seldons. They ran the universe. Then a funny thing happened. It didn't work. All of the fine tuning and macroeconomic policy that the experts had been preparing

Market mullahs

'Economic common sense' may be the most harmful fundamentalism of all . Tom Walkom exposes the successful propaganda offensive of the true believers of finance.

flubbed. The finely burnished machine screwed up. It started screwing up in the late 1960s (the economists blamed the Vietnam war). It continued screwing up into the 1970s (the economists blamed

cool, rational, scientific economist, was shown to be a fraud. So now we are in the era of the economic believers. What distinguishes a believer from an old-style economist is that the believer needs no proof. He just believes. This is not to suggest that post-war economists really did prove anything. Their science was always just a bit bogus, their uncertainties disguised by jargon and mathematics. But at least they thought they *should* prove things. They prided themselves on possessing rigorous objectivity – even when they didn't.

The believers, on the other hand, know. They just know. They don't need to prove anything. They are propagandists; their role is to convince. Like other fundamentalists, economic believers look back to the sacred texts. Westerners like to mock Iranian mullahs for relying on the Qu'ran. Economic believers are the real mullahs; they think Adam Smith has all the answers. But like other fundamentalists, believers prefer a simple version of this sacred text, one which justifies the present.

That's why, when they talk about economic fundamentals, they mean something very specific. They mean the power of money. A country which ignores economic fundamentals, in this lexicon, ignores the power of money. Mexico ignored economic fundamentals when it tried to build up domestic industry instead of relying on foreign investment. Now that President Carlos Salinas has embraced foreign investors, Mexico is 'facing facts'. You could argue that Mexico's efforts to bypass foreign investment stalled because the country's disparity of wealth allowed the rich to export the capital needed for any economic program. You could argue that the Mexican government never seriously tried. However, the beauty of casting Mexico's development choices in terms of facts, fundamentals and economic reality is that this permits no choice. It's not just that Mexico failed in its attempts to create domestic-

owned industry. It's that the idea was impossible.

So too with Canada. In the late 1970s, Canada tried to increase domestic ownership in manufacturing, take control of its energy sector and develop a state-centred approach to industrial strategy. Much of the attempt was botched but there were some successes. Canadian ownership, for example, did rise. But now the believers



Hot line to the money god. Market economics is an international language.

government spending). It screwed up more in 1981 with a serious two-year depression. It continues to screw up, with the blame shifting between the Japanese, old people (the aging population), government spending, mergers, central bankers, other bankers, the Soviets, the Americans, German unification.

For our purposes, the key effect of all this was that the urbane economist, the

have decreed all of this an ill-advised heresy. To control foreign ownership is to ignore the 'economic reality' that capital likes to go where it pleases. To increase the role of the state is to interfere with the 'fundamentals' of supply and demand. Indeed, what is needed is to 'face facts' and reduce the role of government.

Adam Smith himself wasn't as cut and dried as this. Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, in fact, is a complex and often revolutionary

their own words...

'Economics is just the method. The goal is to change the human soul.'

MARGARET THATCHER

work. True, Smith had little time for the indolent princelings who formed governments in his time. But much of this was based on his notion of value. To Smith, things had economic value only if they were useful and only if they were created by labor. Unproductive workers were those who created no value. Soldiers and courtiers – that is, government workers – spent their time waging war and fawning on monarchs. To Smith, this was of no use; hence governments were unproductive.

But what would Smith say today of the junk-bond dealers, high-priced corporate lawyers, government consultants and media economists so fond of quoting his work? Probably he would lump them in with courtiers and soldiers as socially non-productive. Probably he would be right. For the truth is that our economy is dominated not by those who create wealth in Smith's sense, the hearty capitalist-owners of pin factories. It is dominated instead by those who manipulate wealth in its most abstract sense – by the Ivan Boeskys and Conrad Blacks of this world.

Lenin called these people 'finance capital'; the US social theorist Thorstein Veblen called them 'financiers'. We call them the 'investment community' (the word community adds a nice, soothing touch). It's all the same thing. It's Smith's warriors and courtiers. When everything was going fine, in the grey-flannel world of the 1950s, these people were called captains of industry. They were said to drink martinis and occupy the tops of high-rise buildings in places such as New York.

When captains of industry dominated the world, all that was needed of economists was their alleged expertise. No one needed to justify the captains. Why should they? Things were just humming along. But the problem now is that it has become clearer that those on top really don't do much; they are just there to fleece the earnings of others. Boesky was just the most obvious example.

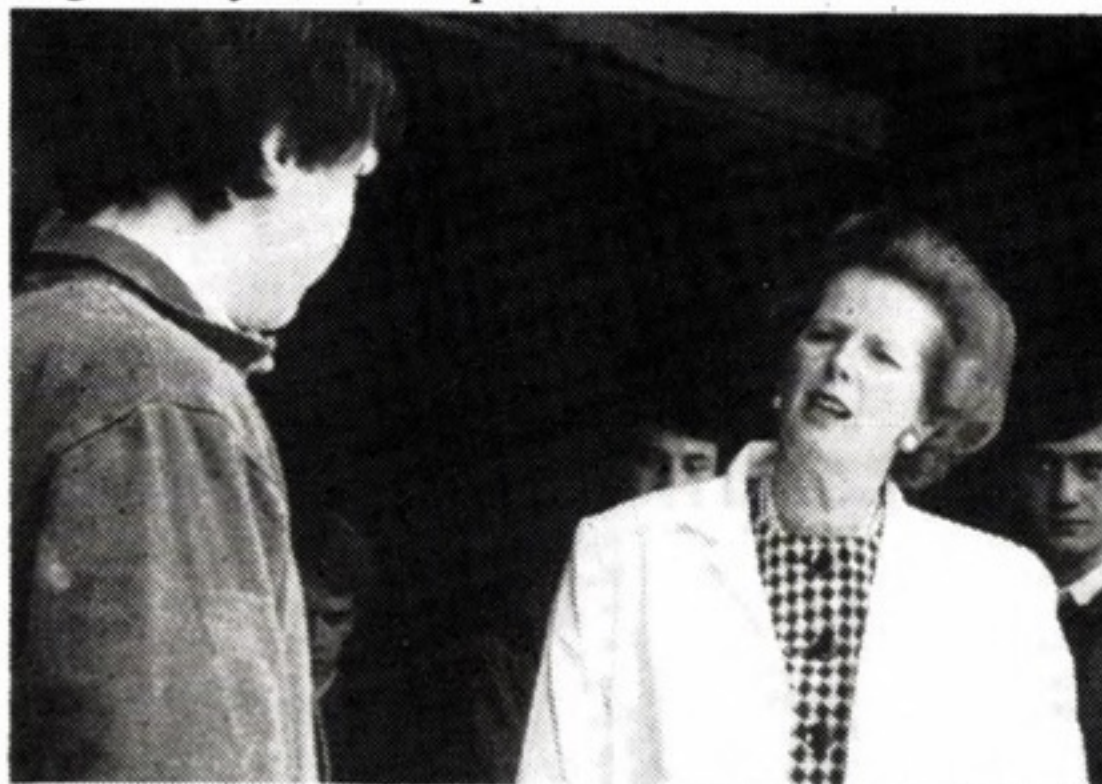
At the same time, the world economy is in some trouble. Inflation keeps on popping up; trade flows are out of whack; in the US, banks fall and splatter like broken eggs. A lot of people – too many

people – are out of work. The cause of these problems is complicated. But it is probably not unrelated to the first point, that the world economy is run by and for those who manipulate abstract wealth. The net effect of all this is that we need believers. If we don't have believers, other people might start asking questions – and then there would be serious trouble. And that's the role the economic fundamentalists play.

Take Canada again. Its economy suffers from two problems. First, it is based largely on resources whose prices move up and down. This is an old problem. Second, it is opening up. Canadian manufacturing used to be protected by geography and tariffs from the competition of others. Technology and the Canada-US free-trade deal are ending that. Businesses are going under and workers are finding themselves without work.

Those who run this country figure the way out of these problems is to reduce wages. That's logical. If wages fall, Canadian goods – both resource and manufactured – will be cheaper. But it's not necessarily the best thing for those who find their wages cut or those who are out of work. These people might prefer other solutions. They might prefer the reconstruction of tariff walls, for example.

But tariff walls are not popular with those in the business of manipulating abstract wealth. The whole point of abstract wealth is to have no frontiers, to allow capital to slither around the world searching for the fattest return. This is where the believers come in. The real problem, they say, is government spending. Why is it a problem? The answer is



A Thatcher lecture for a 'moaning minny'.

obvious: it is a problem; Adam Smith says it is a problem; everyone knows it is a problem.

In Canada, those who run things have got away with much by blaming government spending. They have persuaded the Conservative federal government to cut unemployment benefits. This is supposed to reduce the federal deficit. But its real purpose is to make unemployment less attractive and hence allow wages to be cut. They have also persuaded the Government to cut back income taxes on the wealthy and raise consumption taxes which hit the poor. They call this tax reform. Tax reform has had an interesting side effect; higher consumption taxes have pushed up inflation. It now runs at

about five per cent in Canada, which in the general scheme of things isn't that high. But the believers, using the physical analogies so beloved by those who dabble in economics, say that an untreated 5-per-cent inflation snuffle may turn into a 150-per-cent hyperinflation pneumonia. There is no reason this should be true. But it is said and resaid enough to be believed.

You might think that if the believers were that worried about rising prices, they would want cuts in the consumption taxes which increase measured inflation. But they don't. Instead, they have had a revelation. Their revelation is that Canada needs 14-per-cent interest rates to curb the demon inflation (or the UK 15-per-cent, or Australia 20-per-cent – substitute your own). In fact high interest rates don't do much to inflation at all in the short run except raise it. In their heart of hearts, the believers know that. They also know that high interest rates, by driving some companies out of business, can increase unemployment. And that will put pressure on wages to fall.

Cutting wages, not inflation, is their real aim. But the believers don't say that. They talk instead about economic reality. They urge us to face facts. They are on television every night, these secular Jim Bakkers. And they are just as sincere. □

Tom Walkom's lively column appears in the *Toronto Star*.

Worth reading on ... FUNDAMENTALISM

One of the best recent studies of Christian fundamentalism is the highly-readable **Fall From Grace; The Failed Crusade of the Christian Right**; Michael D'Antonio (Farrar, Straus, Giroux 1989). On the rise of Islamic fundamentalism there are several good works: **The Struggle Within Islam**; Ra'fiq Zakaria (Viking Penguin 1988); **Radical Islam**; Emmanuel Sivan (Yale University Press 1985). and **Islamic Fundamentalism**; Dilip Hiro (Paladin 1989). One of the best looks at fundamentalism in power is John Simpson's **Behind Iranian Lines** (Robson Books 1988). On right-wing fundamentalism one of the most comprehensive recent works is **Revolution on the Right**, Simon Gunn; (Pluto Press 1989). An excellent critique of the fundamentalist deep ecology movement is supplied by George Bradford's perceptive pamphlet **How Deep is Deep Ecology?** (Times Change Press, Box 2510, Navato, Ca 94948, USA).

Action groups

These are organizations involved in the fight against different types of fundamentalism:

● **Fundamentalists Anonymous**; (PO Box 20324, Greeley Sq Station, NY 10001, USA) gets ex-fundamentalists back on their feet.

● **Women Against Fundamentalism**; (BM Box 2706, London WC1 3XX, UK.) is a London-based coalition of women drawn from Asian, black and other communities who organize against the anti-women bias of fundamentalism.

● **The Cult Project**; (3400 Stanley St, Montreal, PQ, H3A 1R8, Canada) has information about the scope and methods of cults.

● **The Christic Institute** (Washington, DC. Tel: 202-797-8006) keeps track of the machinations of the fundamentalist right while **Dollars and Sense** magazine, (One Summer St, Sommerville, Mass 02143, USA) examines the impact of free-market fundamentalism.

Eco-apocalypics

Greens have not escaped the tendency to offer simplistic solutions to complex problems. Brian Tokar explores the excesses of eco-fundamentalism.



Photo: Nikolai Ignatiev/Network

Earth vigilantes. Green direct action raises the environmental stakes – but militancy does not always make for clear-headed analysis.

THE environment is not just another issue,' suggested the *New York Times* after April's Earth Day celebrations. 'It has become a modern secular religion.' And like other religions, environmentalism has spawned its own brand of fundamentalism. For every carefully reasoned and questioning account of the growing ecological crisis and the social and political changes it demands, one can find an equally striking display of strident alarmism, received truth, denunciation of heresy and all manner of apocalypics.

Environmental issues have become increasingly complex and global in scope, as the future of life on earth hangs on civilization's ability to profoundly change its ways. Faced with such overwhelming threats, people are ever willing to embrace easy formulas, slogans and recipes for salvation, to avoid the big issues and remain certain that they are in the right.

'Everyone must stop eating meat before anything else can change,' animal-rights enthusiasts exhort us. 'There are too many humans – cut the population in half,' say other activists. 'We are doomed as a species, but Gaia will make sure that life continues.' Such pronouncements often bring intelligent discussion to a close, leaving the speaker feeling righteous in the knowledge that they alone know the right answer. This, of course, is the key to fundamentalist thinking.

Earth First! (always spelled with a '!') is the most militant of the new environmental formations in North America. Under the slogan 'No compromise in the defense of Mother Earth!' Earth First! is the leading proponent of 'monkeywrenching' – tree spiking, disabling heavy equipment and militant civil disobedience – to prevent further intrusions of industrial civilization upon the wilderness. Such

tactics have significantly raised the stakes for wilderness preservation and the protection of biological diversity. At times, however, Earth First!ers have fallen into a nasty form of eco-fundamentalism.

A major controversy began when Earth First! co-founder Dave Foreman was quoted in an interview by deep ecologist Bill Devall making some shockingly misanthropic statements in the name of deep ecology and Earth First! Deep ecologists claim overpopulation as the underlying

their own words...

'The human race could go extinct, and I for one would not shed any tears.'

DAVE FOREMAN OF US DEEP ECOLOGIST GROUP
EARTH FIRST

cause of ecological crisis and advocate population reduction. Foreman took this one step further, advocating forced sterilizations, ending food aid to starving people (particularly, at the time, in Ethiopia), and sealing US borders against refugees from the wars in Latin America. To Foreman, such measures were ways to 'let nature seek its own balance', and prevent 'more destruction of our wilderness, more poisoning of our water and air ...'

The emphasis was clearly on the 'our'. Forget industrial pollution. Forget capitalism's growth imperative and the relationship between nationalism and militarism. Forget the political and social reasons for hunger and immigration, and the vast discrepancies in wealth and resource use among the world's peoples.

Devall's interview with Foreman was published in 1987 in the Australian magazine *Simply Living* and was widely reprinted and quoted around the world. It became the primary basis for an all-out attack against deep ecology by the social eco-

gist Murray Bookchin, who characterized it as a 'black hole of half-digested, ill-formed and half-baked ideas' and an 'ideological toxic dump'. Bookchin condemns deep ecologists for ignoring the social and historic basis of ecological crisis in favour of a distorted biological determinism with quasi-fascist implications.

The now-famous deep ecology/social ecology debates raged on – raising some important issues but rapidly degenerating into name calling. Writers in the *Earth First!* journal resorted to outrageous and increasingly misanthropic claims in defense of their notion that overpopulation was to blame for all the earth's ills. Starvation and disease were merely 'Gaian' solutions to overpopulation. Even the AIDS virus should be welcomed while eradicating smallpox was a violation of biodiversity. It was impossible for humans to aspire to live in harmony with nature.

Like religious fundamentalisms this 'eco-brutalist' thinking has its own apocalyptic notions of the 'last days' and of wilderness warriors as 'chosen people'. Yet global phenomena such as the thinning of the ozone layer and the greenhouse effect make it increasingly far-fetched to predict that any of the earth's ecosystems will survive a total environmental collapse. Either we create new ways for people to live on this earth or the civilization we live in will likely bring everything down with it. No form of eco-survivalism is likely to help.

Tired of Earth First! being characterized as a racist and reactionary organization, local activists began to speak out. Internal discussions became increasingly intense. Then, on a summer night in 1989, Foreman's home was raided by an armed FBI team. He was indicted for conspiracy and jailed, accused of loaning money to an undercover agent who had roped

several Arizona Earth First! activists into an elaborate scheme to topple power lines. Faced with the intense criticism from his own compatriots and the full force of the police apparatus, Foreman began to reconsider some of his earlier views.

In articles and public appearances since his arrest, Foreman has displayed far greater sensitivity to the underlying causes of ecological destruction. He has expressed open solidarity with black and Native American activists who have been victimized by similar FBI sting operations and disruption tactics. In a joint appearance in New York City with Murray Bookchin, he called for reconciliation: 'We have the same enemies, we are fighting the same battle no matter what we emphasize'. Other prominent Earth First!ers, like co-founder Mike Roselle, have taken it a step further: 'The enemies of wilderness are also the enemies of freedom and democracy ... We can't save the wilds without confronting them.' Chalk one up for the power of thought and experience to cut through the dogmas of fundamentalism.

However, eco-fundamentalism lives on, not only in the pages of the *Earth First!* journal but in many sectors of the environmental movement. There are animal-rights activists who would suspend discussion of all other environmental issues until they have done away with meat eating. They dismiss the rights of indigenous tribal peoples, who have been stewards and protectors of local eco-systems for thousands of years, because they engage in hunting for some of their food.

They are only the most vocal and widespread of single-issue fanatics attempting to sway Greens in the US. There are people who insist that fertilizing soils with tons of ground rock dust is the only solution to deforestation and the greenhouse effect. There are self-described Henry Georgists who seek to solve all of society's problems through a pre-industrial tax policy based solely on land values. Each of their positions holds some grains of truth but in each case fundamentalist thinking and 'born-again' certitude only serve to limit meaningful discussion.

The fundamentalism of a few leaves many other political ecologists open to an uncomfortable guilt by association. Yet the most alarming brand of fundamentalism comes not from the ranks of radical environmentalists but from the unquestioning believers in industrial progress. For if environmentalism is the up and coming new religion, industrialism and scientism are surely the established one.

For sheer audacity the claims of growth fundamentalists are striking '... the nature of the physical world permits continued improvement in humankind's economic lot... indefinitely,' writes economist Julian Simon, a Reaganite favorite. This dogma of technological optimism has also found its way into the environmental

movement. One of the better known US ecologists, Barry Commoner, postulates an almost limitless growth based on the capture of solar energy. Commoner's underlying faith in growth and progress leads him to ignore the impact on non-energy resources (minerals, forests, water, soils) and the grotesque proliferation of waste products – not to mention the consequences for human culture if we are driven by the growth imperative to increasingly sever our ties with non-human nature.

James Lovelock, the inventor and atmospheric scientist who first elaborated the Gaia Hypothesis of atmospheric self-regulation, is another unlikely believer in the cult of unlimited progress. He forecasts a bright future of techno-fantasies

like ocean travel by whale power and space colonies on Mars because 'when urban industrial man does something ecologically bad he notices it and tends to put things right again'.

This faith-in-the-name-of-science is peppered with unsupported and self-contradictory ideas. Such notions derive their power and persistence from the force of status-quo ideology that lurks behind them. Compared to true believers in technological progress, the excesses of the more unconventional environmental zealots are proving to be surprisingly open to reason and change. □

Brian Tokar is the author of *The Green Alternative: Creating an Ecological Future*.

BATTLE FOR BUDDHA

Mark Timm reports on the unlikely growth of fundamentalism in Thailand.

Fundamentalist Buddhism would seem to be a contradiction in terms. Buddhism is a non-dogmatic philosophy which is supremely tolerant of other spiritual approaches. It also emphasizes personal spiritual growth in a way that doesn't support the emergence of charismatic leaders.

But there is concern in Thailand that Buddhism is being undermined by the kind of corruption which has led to the growth of Christian and Muslim fundamentalism elsewhere. The country's rapid economic expansion has spawned an ethos of greed and a growing number of Thais pay little more than lip service to Buddhist practice.

The Sangha Council, Thailand's supreme religious authority, has fallen into disrepute. Critics claim the old men who run the Council are out of touch. Monks are no longer revered for their wisdom but for their ability to pick lottery tickets or bless phallic talismans. A spate of scandals in which monks have been accused of

everything from fraud to rape has further undermined the credibility of a faith which claims more than 90 per cent of all Thais as its followers.

'In the past, people saw Buddhism as the true teaching,' according to Dr Chinda Chandrkaew, a former monk and professor of Buddhism at Bangkok's Thammasat University. 'If Buddhism said something was evil, people simply would not do it. Today's generation will just laugh at you if you say that because they see everything through the glass of science.'

The decline in mainstream Buddhism has resulted in the emergence of a controversial sect called Santi Asoke led by former TV personality Phra Bhotirak. In the 1970s Phra became disillusioned with the corruption he claims dominates Thailand's Dhammayutika and Mahanikaya sects. Some believe he was just too impatient with the requirements these sects laid down before he could become a monk. Whatever the reason, he

founded Santi Asoke in 1975 – and there are already an estimated half million lay members, all strict vegetarians who eat only one meal a day.

Bhotirak says he can relate to the efforts of Muslims and Christians to enforce stricter morality through the law and bemoans the relaxed Thai attitude toward life which has contributed to religious decline.

Santi Asoke's influence has taken increasingly concrete form in the person of its best-known follower, Bangkok Governor

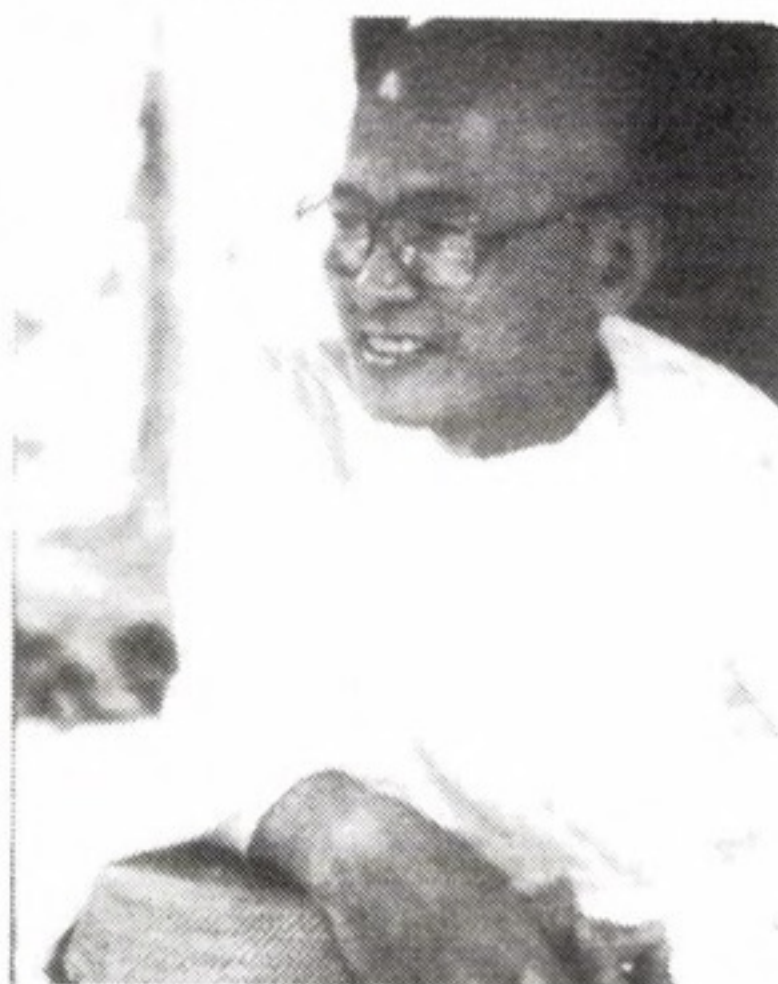
Chamlong Srimuang. The former soldier is widely respected for his ascetic lifestyle. Back in 1988, Chamlong formed the Pelang Dhamma ('moral force') party to contest national elections. Party candidates won 14 opposition seats in parliament. During all three campaigns, Santi Asoke printing presses churned out pamphlets and posters for Chamlong. There is nothing illegal about this, but it certainly worries the traditional political elite. Together

with the Buddhist hierarchy, they decided to move against Santi Asoke and Bhotirak.

In June 1989 Bhotirak was told to disrobe. When he failed to do so he was arrested, forcibly disrobed and charged under the Buddhist Monk Act with failing to comply with an order of the Supreme Patriarch, Thai Buddhism's equivalent of the Roman Catholic Pope. He and 79 followers also face the more serious criminal charge of dressing to impersonate a Buddhist monk.

If found guilty of all charges, Bhotirak would face a total of more than 34 years in prison. The trial could last several years. Bhotirak's lawyer is Thongpai Thongbao, a celebrated defender of human rights and winner of Asia's prestigious Magsaysay Award. He is basing his defence on provisions within the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the Thai constitution guaranteeing freedom of religion and association.

Mark Timm writes regularly for NI from Bangkok.



Fundamentalist monk Phra Bhotirak.

Photo: Mark Timm

FUNDAMENTALISM- THE FACTS



CHRISTIANITY

GROUPS: These range from Pentecostals, Baptists and other independent fundamentalist churches to 'charismatic' renewal movements in the mainstream churches both Catholic ('Evangelization 2000') and Protestant. They have gained particular momentum in the 1980s.

STRENGTH: These groups are strongest in the US - of the 60 million born-again Christians in the US,

about half describe themselves as fundamentalists.¹ From there they have spread the message to Latin America, the Philippines and parts of the Caribbean and Africa. Their vigorous missionary program combines emotional religion with militant anti-communism. Every hour 400 Latin Americans convert to fundamentalist or evangelical churches such as the Pentecostals.² In Guatemala, for example, Catholicism is rapidly being overtaken - in 1989 there were 400 ordained Catholic priests compared with 7,000 Protestant pastors.³ In Nicaragua between 1980 and 1986 the number of Pentecostal congregations grew from 682 to 2,012.

SCRIPTURE: Christian fundamentalists take the Bible quite literally, concentrating particularly on the Old Testament. They defend literal translations of controversial biblical passages such as the Immaculate Conception or the Garden of Eden interpretation of creation. But fundamentalist publishing of new texts is also a booming business. For example born-again prophet and writer Hal Lindsay has sold over 15 million copies of his apocalyptic vision *The Late Great Planet Earth*.⁴

BELIEFS: Christian fundamentalists see God and the Devil as active forces in everyday life and ascribe the most mundane decisions and events to divine intervention. Most of them believe society is not far from the final judgment where God will descend to earth and take the side of the righteous (theirs) against a plethora of enemies - secular humanists, homosexuals, supporters of abortion, communists, false Christians etc.

SOCIAL AGENDA: Christian fundamentalists generally incline towards the political right with the view that 'God helps those who help themselves'. The rich do and the poor don't. A main fundamentalist goal is to protect the Christian family against moral decay and the national state against the forces of atheism, be they communist or secular humanist. Their level of activity ranges from passive support for right-wing causes to direct action against abortion clinics (including 34 bombings and 47 arson attacks in the last 12 years in the US).⁵ In Central America and the Philippines the fundamentalist right is implicated in paramilitary campaigns against those fighting for social change.

Fundamentalists of whatever stripe or colour have much in common. But each movement has its own special characteristics and beliefs. Here the NI offers factual portraits of five major strains of fundamentalism.



Illustration: Olive O'Leary

ISLAM

GROUPS: The two main groups of Islamic fundamentalists correspond to the two wings of Islam - the Shi'ites and the Sunnis. The Shi'ites are concentrated mainly in Iran, Iraq, southern Lebanon and parts of the Arabian peninsula with the Sunnis dominating the rest of the Muslim world.

STRENGTH: Nearly one in five of the world's people is a Muslim. Muslims form the majority in 42 nations, and a significant minority in another 45 nations.⁶ This provides the fundamentalist movement with ample room for growth. Islamic fundamentalism has grown up as part of a more general Islamic revival. The success of the Islamic revolution in Iran is the most visible sign of fundamentalist ferment. The Islamic Brotherhoods and their more militant spin-offs in Egypt and Syria (such as Al-Jihad, the group that assassinated Egyptian President Anwar Sadat) are typical of Sunni fundamentalism.



SCRIPTURE: The basic scripture for Islam is the Qu'ran - and the fundamentalists adhere to a literal interpretation. Some of the more modern influences on fundamentalist thinking are Khomeini's Islamic Government (Shi'ite) and the writing of the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb such as *In the Shadow of the Qu'ran* and *Signposts on the Road* (Sunnis).⁷

BELIEFS: To the fundamentalist Islam is a total belief system providing direction for every aspect of life - culture, politics, economics and personal behaviour. All fundamentalists believe in the firm application of the Shari'a Law which represents

the direct rule of Allah over society. At the present time only three Islamic countries - Iran, Saudi Arabia and Sudan - maintain rule by Shari'a.

SOCIAL AGENDA: This is a combination of egalitarianism and militant puritanism. There is suspicion of wealth, particularly that gained by interest-bearing capital, as a potential source of corruption. The excess associated with the oil wealth that flooded the Middle East was one of the causes of the Islamic revival. Muslim fundamentalists are absolutely opposed to drinking, drugs, women's rights, abortion, homosexuality and any kind of sex outside marriage. They are committed to a wide range of severe sanctions from censorship to dismemberment in order to discourage these and other manifestations of 'the modern world'.



MESSIANIC CAPITALISM

GROUPS: The absolute faith in market forces as a solution to all human problems is most widespread in business and conservative political circles in the Anglo-Saxon world. It also has its proponents throughout the capitalist world, particularly in Japan and the newly-industrialized countries of Asia. This doctrine is propagated by a network of influential private pressure groups such as the Heritage Foundation in the US, the Adam Smith Institute in the UK, the Kiel Economics Institute in the West Germany and the Fraser Institute in Canada.

STRENGTH: This is a form of fundamentalism very much in fashion today. The US under Reagan and the UK under Thatcher have pioneered a radical conservatism that involves substantial retreat from previous welfare commitments to help the poor. The influence of this doctrine has most recently spread to Eastern Europe (particularly Poland) where it is being embraced as the solution to decades of communist mismanagement of the economy. Market fundamentalism has also influenced the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in their prescriptions for Third World economies.

SCRIPTURE: The classic texts of Adam Smith and the other founders



Serfdom (1944) and his influential Geneva-based Mount Pelerin Society laid the groundwork for militant laissez-faire anti-tax capitalism. The Reagan and Thatcher revolutions have also thrown up their own literature such as George Gilder's very popular *Poverty and Wealth*.⁸

BELIEFS: The messianic capitalists believe in a program to reduce government and allow the 'invisible hand' of the market to create and spread wealth. They advocate privatization, cutbacks in social services and deregulation to allow industry a free rein. The Thatcher government had put 17 previously publicly-held companies into private hands by 1987. Deregulation of the Federal Savings

and Loan industry in the US has caused one of the biggest financial collapses in human history - costing the US taxpayer \$500 billion.⁹

SOCIAL AGENDA: It would be a mistake to see messianic capitalism as simply an economic philosophy. Its rigorous program aims to break the financial and psychological dependency that a number of groups - cultural workers, public servants, welfare recipients - have on the 'nanny state'. As with the Christian fundamentalists the values most prized by messianic capitalism are discipline, sobriety and hard work. Fundamentalist born-again techniques are increasingly being employed in business training seminars.

MARXISM-LENINISM

GROUPS: There are a myriad of small Marxist-Leninist groups in almost every country that allows them the political space to organize. The remaining Marxist-Leninist states are predominantly in the Third World - China, Mozambique, Angola, North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Laos and Cambodia. Albania is the only remaining European representative.

STRENGTH: Marxism-Leninism (fundamentalist communism) is on the wane. After the movements of political reform that swept Eastern Europe and the USSR in 1989 orthodox Marxism-Leninism is very much on the defensive. In 1985 there were 18 states that ascribed to Marxism-Leninism; today there are only 10. The absolute faith in fundamentalist communism is today the monopoly of a few extremist move-



ments like Sendero Luminoso in Peru and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia.

SCRIPTURE: The works of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin are the holy scripts of Marxism-Leninism. These are among the best-selling and most translated books in the world. However some (such as Marx's *Capital* and *The Communist Manifesto* and Lenin's *What is to be Done?*) have been more widely used than others (the early work of Marx on human alienation, for example) that raise embarrassing issues about autocratic government.

BELIEFS: Orthodox Marxism-Leninism cloaks itself in the certainty that an elite corps of professional revolutionaries who have conquered state power can create a classless society based on freedom from necessity. The Marxist-Leninist replaces the belief in God's will with the materialist notion that change in the economic base of society is enough to liberate human potential for good. The centralization of economic and political power will allow for the rational use of resources to serve society as a whole and not just a privileged capitalist elite.

SOCIAL AGENDA: Marxist-Leninist regimes have extended state power in a totalistic fashion both over economic enterprises and the lives of individual citizens. Popular rights to jobs, health care and housing have been the central goals of policy.

CULTS

GROUPS: A wide spectrum including: survivalists; new-age therapy movements; racist groups like the Aryan Church; gurus purporting to represent Eastern religions; and independent churches that have grown up around powerful leaders like Sun Myung Moon, L Ron Hubbard, or Elizabeth Claire Prophet. The largest and most influential cults are Hubbard's Church of Scientology and Moon's Unification Church ('the Moonies'). Some groups are merely local while others have an international presence.

STRENGTH: In the US there are 3000 or so cults with what are conservatively estimated to be three million adherents. The US has the largest following but these groups are spreading rapidly in the Third World and Europe. Prophet's The

Church Universal and Triumphant is a presence in Ghana and The Unification Church is active in Uruguay and Central America.

SCRIPTURE: Each cult tends to have its own holy book that is the 'revealed truth' - a guide to the meaning of the universe as well as the more mundane matters of everyday human behaviour. Hubbard's *Dianetics* or Moon's *Divine Principles* are cases in point. Moon's book recommends a kind of 'theocratic socialism' as the optimum form of human government. *Dianetics* offers a highly-individualized success-oriented salvation.

BELIEFS: Cult adherents have a variety of beliefs but common themes emerge: authoritarian leadership and absolute obedience; belief in a coming apocalypse; hostility to outsiders (except as potential converts); and belief in the total



explanation of the world provided by cult theology.

SOCIAL AGENDA: Cults are usually thriving businesses and their main goal seems to be to increase their size and financial clout. Some are very successful. Moon's church owns millions of dollars in real estate and two daily newspapers (the right-wing Washington Times and New York City Tribune) in the US alone.¹⁰ Such organizations are quick to jump on bandwagons such as anti-drug campaigns (the Scientologists) to gain respectability.

1 *Fall from Grace: the Failed Crusade of the Christian Right*, Michael D'Antonio (Farrar, Strauss, Giroux 1989). 2 'The fundamentalist surge in Latin America', Penny Lemoux in *The Christian Century* (20 January 1988). 3 *Mid Trial and Tribulation: Protestantism in Modern Guatemala*, VG Burnett (University of

Texas, unpublished conference paper). 4 *Faith, Hope, No Charity*, Judy Haiven (New Star Books, 1985). 5 National Abortion Federation Fact Sheet, 31 December 1989. 6 *The Struggle Within Islam*, Rafiq Zakaria (Penguin, 1988). 7 *Radical Islam*, Emmanuel Sivan (Yale University Press, 1985). 8 *Revolution on*

the Right, Simon Gunn (Pluto Press, 1989). 9 'America's dream turns into a tale of big-time fraud', an article in UK newspaper *The Independent*, 28 June 1990. 10 'Messianic Capitalism', an article by Laurence Grafstein in US magazine *The New Republic*, 20 February 1984.

The sword of God

Fundamentalist Christians have become the shock troops of counter-revolution in Central America. Tom Barry explores the US roots of the evangelical explosion in the region.



Photo: Holmes Lebell/Camera Press

Guatemalan children play at the serious business of military execution. Protestant evangelists have made their contribution to Central America's culture of violent repression.

THE expansive La Perla coffee estate is in the hotly contested Ixcan area of the Guatemalan highlands. La Perla is a case study in counter-insurgency. Besides the army and the plantation managers, the people who come and go from La Perla's heavily-guarded airstrip are US-based evangelical groups. These right-wing Christians are working hand in glove with the army and local oligarch Roberto Arena Barrera – owner of the plantation – to combat Guatemala's largely Indian guerilla movement.

The Indian laborers at La Perla receive less than a dollar a day, live in rows of thatched huts and shop at the plantation store. The estate is guarded on three sides by military outposts strictly controlling all entry into this roadless area. La Perla's supplies are delivered by the Guatemalan Army's Civil Affairs division.

Arena Barrera claims that he has 'turned La Perla over to the Lord'. He is a key figure in the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, a right-wing evangelical/charismatic organization based in California. He is also the Guatemalan representative of Americans for Freedom in Central America. The Florida-based Facts of Faith helps save souls at La Perla, while providing medical and food aid to Barrera's malnourished coffee pickers.

Thirty years ago, few could have predicted the extent and power of Protestantism in Latin America. Religion was the exclusive province of the Catholic Church. More than a religion, Catholicism was a culture, with deep roots throughout

the hemisphere. To be Latin was to be Catholic. But the traditional order has begun to collapse. Latin America is undergoing what David Stoll, author of *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?*, calls a new Protestant Reformation.

Nowhere is this so evident as in Central America, where in the last 15 years fundamentalist Christianity has spread with prairie-fire speed. In Guatemala a third of the population are *evangelicos*, or non-Catholics. And 10 to 15 per cent of Salvadorans, Hondurans and Nicaraguans now belong to the evangelical community, which is expanding three times faster than the population.

The Catholic hierarchy in the region calls it 'the invasion of the sects' and places the blame squarely on the United States. The Honduran bishops accuse the CIA of covertly financing evangelical growth and the Guatemalan church hierarchy brands the evangelical movement an imperialist conspiracy to block revolutionary change and maintain US political and economic dominance.

The 1982 coup that catapulted General Rios Montt, a member of the US-sponsored Verbo evangelical church, to power in Guatemala City was regarded as a sign from God by many Guatemalan *evangelicos*. Despite his subsequent downfall they have persisted in their campaign to 'save' Guatemala. Rios Montt and another *evangelico* Jorge Serrano are both running for President in the October 1990 election with the support of the country's vociferous political right.

But political campaigns are merely the

respectable side of religious revolution in Guatemala. Numerous evangelical groups co-operated with the military in its bloody counter-insurgency war begun during the Rios Montt regime. Groups like the US-based Youth with a Mission and Christian Broadcasting Network joined with the Reagan Administration to support Rios Montt's crusade to mop up leftist insurgents. These *evangelicos* worked closely with the military to establish 'model villages' on the ashes of Indian communities destroyed by Rios Montt's legions.

The bloody counter-insurgency campaign razed over 400 Indian villages in the early 1980s. But it still failed to eliminate the insurgents – most of whom were poor Indian peasants. The transition from military to civilian rule in 1986 temporarily raised popular hopes for peace and improved socio-economic conditions. But the army never lost power and human-rights abuses are again on the rise.

The battle for the beautiful north-western highlands of Guatemala has prompted the most intensive co-operation between the military and the fundamentalist right. In its 'Operation Whole Armor,' Bible Literature International claims to have distributed over 70,000 Bibles to Guatemalan soldiers and paramilitary patrols. The Summer Institute for Linguistics pitches in with interpretation services for the army's civil-affairs and psychological operations teams. Others sponsor food distribution and educational programs in contested areas.

It is not hard to find evidence linking the explosion of evangelical churches – mostly the Assemblies of God church or highly emotional neo-pentecostal sects – with Washington and right-wing forces right across the region. The campaign to overturn the Sandinistas in Nicaragua

their own words...

'There's no question there's a hell. It's eternal torment too, like being strapped into an electric chair for ever but you never quite die.'

SOUTH CAROLINA EVANGELIST DR JORDAN

attracted a stream of US evangelicals to the contra camps on the Honduran border. They passed out Bibles and supplies shipped to Central America on US military aircraft and banana boats.

Politics is also behind the hand-out programs that US evangelicals sponsor in many Honduran communities. Alan Dansforth, the US director of World Gospel Outreach, explained that food hand-outs are used as a bait to attract poor families to church services. He said that evangelicalism 'can be a powerful tool to head communism off at the pass'. In El Salvador US missionaries are regularly invited to deliver anti-communist sermons on military bases. The right-wing Paralife International recently sponsored the tour of a Vietnam veteran who told Salvadoran

troops that killing in the fight against the communist Anti-Christ was the 'duty of every Christian'.

Evangelism in Central America is supported by a well-financed infrastructure of Bible schools, mission agencies, research centers, publishing houses and radio and television corporations – most of which are headquartered in the US sunbelt. At missionary schools and training centers in the US evangelists are trained with literature and lectures that bristle with military terminology. They are taught to move among 'unreached peoples' and conduct spiritual warfare by establishing 'beach-heads' or conducting victory campaigns.

Even better is to win an entire country for Christ. The California-based Overseas Crusades sponsors the Discipling A Whole Nation (DAWN) method. First attempted in the Philippines, a national campaign is now under way in Guatemala. According to the Crusade's domino theory of evangelization, as soon as key nations are converted then nearby countries will quickly follow.

The rise of the pentecostals has marginalized the mainstream and progressive Protestant churches in the region, pushing to the forefront a conservative theology that preached individual salvation and an imminent Second Coming. Followers have been encouraged to abstain from participation in unions, community organizations and other secular groups. At the same time, evangelical leaders have cited biblical references to support the notion that political and military rulers – with the exception of leftists – are ordained by God and should be passively obeyed.

This rightward shift of evangelical politics has been encouraged and applauded by the US government. The Santa Fe Committee – an informal group of Reagan advisers – stressed the urgent need to counteract liberation theology in the region.

The Catholic Church remains the dominant religious institution in Central America. But the continued rapid growth of the evangelical movement feeds on the failure of the Catholic Church to address its own weaknesses and bodes well for evangelical optimism about growth.

Yet it is easy to overestimate the influence and strength of evangelicalism. In Central America, as in the US, the evangelical churches are not monolithic but extremely sectarian and divisive. The lack of training of most evangelical pastors and their failure to address the structural causes of poverty may eventually restrict the growth and credibility of evangelicalism.

Besides, struggling against the reactionary ideology and conservative theology of the Religious Right is a significant minority of Christians. Their interpretation of the gospels could yet lead to a much more progressive religious reformation in Latin America. □

Tom Barry works with the Inter-Hemispheric Resource Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Facing the fire on high

We will never counter fundamentalism by asking people to stop and think, argues Chris Brazier.

I WOULDN'T count myself as a very spiritual person. I have always tended to see the political and the spiritual as polar opposites and argued from an atheist or at least agnostic standpoint. 'If God stands by and condones world hunger,' I often used to say, 'if He allows so many people such a minimal, pathetic chance in life in the name of some cosmic non-interference policy then He is not anyone I would want to serve.'

And yet ... when I look back over my life I remember significant moments when I have been drawn to the idea of surrendering to God and faith. Walking through New Orleans at an impressionable 18, for example, I was accosted by evangelists on the street, invited in for a meal and talk and offered the chance and the bliss of surrender to God. 'Just open yourself up to Christ and invite him in,' they said. 'We envy you the moment when He enters your life, the happiness you will feel when you know you have come home.' And for a while back there I was sorely tempted... Even after I had tumbled out on to the street in search of a bit of perspective, their Intrusive and Omniscient God seemed to hang over the rooftops of the French Quarter. It was with great relief that I came back down to the earthiness of jazz, prostitution and sordid commerce.

The very act of surrender is appealing in such cases. By buying into a package of certainties you are at the same time kissing goodbye to a wasteland of anxiety and rootlessness. If God or Allah is out

there holding everlasting truth and meaning, then all we have to do is submit to His will (the very word Islam means submission).

How can the secular Westerner match this attractiveness? Answer: with other kinds of faith. I didn't give in to the messianic tempters in New Orleans. But a couple of years later I certainly bought into a package of faith in a different-coloured parcel.

In my university hall of residence I lived next door to a student who had recently 'invited Christ into his life' and had all the bright-eyed enthusiasm of the new convert. He would try desperately to convert me; I would try just as passionately to undermine his new certainty. It seemed to me like I won the argument time and again – coming up triumphantly with discrepancies between Old and New Testaments, exposing his own illogic. But he was never truly shaken. What mattered was his faith, his personal relationship with God and 'Truth' – my rational arguments, however convincing, were never going to shake his happiness.

By then I had my own evangelizing to do: I had discovered Maoism, or at least my own interpretation of it, which ran along these lines. People were born as blank sheets, *tabulae rasae*. They became what the world made them. Violence, injustice, oppression – everything negative emerged from a selfishness which had to be purged by proper education in the art of living for the good of



Mao inspired the fervent belief not just of Chinese but of a generation of Western radicals.

Photo: Camera Press

others. Such education could only be controlled by a benevolent state. These totalitarian notions excluded any sense of a soul that was immune to social engineering. Yet they gave me a watertight system with an answer for everything – and my belief in it was utterly religious.

How can the Western secular project possibly compete with this kind of certainty? All it offers is unending angst, a difficult terrain of mountainous doubts and ethical potholes. When the Fire On High of fundamentalism flares up, is there really no alternative but to grit our teeth and get on with the job of patient, rational persuasion?

Ultimately I'm not sure that's enough. Fundamentalism isn't simply an escape from the complexity of life. It is also a response to the spiritual vacuum at the heart of modern Western society. The young people who 'dropped out' in the 1960s – wandering off in search of Eastern wisdom or journeying deep into their own skulls via hallucinogens – were escaping a materialism more pervasive than at any time in human history. Few of these counter-culturites found a coherent alternative, which may help explain the conservative reaction of the late 1970s and 1980s. But the same impulse to explore alternatives to the empty greed at the heart of Western culture is now flowering again.

And as radicals who are as hostile to the capitalist project as to the fundamentalist one, we weaken our case unduly by denying the spirit. It isn't enough to say 'Stop! Think about what you are doing'. People are craving more than rationality – they are craving *meaning*. And that is why the surge of the Green movement is such a hopeful sign. We can talk about Deep Greeness as a kind of fundamentalism in itself, throwing off the Machine Age and the evils that have befallen us since we last baked our own bread and hoed our own patch of earth. But the Green movement is powerful and resonant nonetheless. It has started to reach people in such mass numbers *not* because it tells them about the pollution problem, the exhaustion of resources and so on – that information has been around for decades.

No, Green thinking has power and resonance because it is more than thinking. It talks in almost religious terms of the earth and cosmic principles of balance. It is a Western version of Eastern religion – like Taoism and Buddhism, it sees humans as inseparable from nature rather than mighty conquerors of it. And it values our inner lives in contrast to the unyielding materialism of both Left and Right.

If we are to have a chance of rolling back the waves of fundamentalism our resistance must be spiritual as well as rational. Otherwise we have not a hope in hell of success. □

Chris Brazier is an NI co-editor.

Mesmerized by faith

From the communist apparatchik to the Hindu zealot the true believer stalks the world stage wearing many costumes. For Jeremiah Creedon the temptations of absolute belief are frighteningly close to the surface in each of us.



The shining faces of the faithful at an old-time tent service of Mississippi evangelists.

I VIVIDLY recall the few seconds worth of coverage allotted to the Ayatollah Khomeini's funeral on US television. In one scene a vast crowd had surrounded what was said to be the Iranian leader's coffin; in the next, mass grief had turned to frenzy. Those bearing the coffin stumbled and the box broke open, revealing an enshrouded corpse. Several mourners died that day, trampled in the pandemonium.

Gazing from a faraway vantage point, a city in the US Midwest, I could look upon that spectacle with both fascination and disdain. Once again TV had transformed one people's trauma into another's circus. The Iranians seemed clearly to be suffering from a collective disease – the fever of absolute belief – but it was a condition I felt strangely unthreatened by. I couldn't imagine those closer to home might be harboring the same virus.

I was being naive, wilfully so, in the way peculiar to all those who are lulled by peace and comfort into thinking they live outside the forces that make history. The particular events that have led to a new fundamentalist fervor in the Islamic world may be unique; the underlying human impulse to absolute faith is not. My gaze upon them was like that of a man mesmerized by a tracer bullet drifting across the sky, as yet unaware that it had his name on it.

The rhetoric of any absolute faith promises the same thing: an escape from the frustrating limits of human life. And yet lured by the yearning for something more than life offers, the people who join mass movements may end up with some-

thing less. The only species that can come up with the concept of divine power, we are often at our least civilized when striving to merge with this idea of perfection.

But it is wrong to assume that those who trade their own identities for an absolute faith in some person or idea are somehow less than human. Not so. The opposite view, the cult of the reasoning individual so glorified in the West, may in fact be farther removed from the essence of our real character. Whenever this fragile conceit of rationality is stripped away – hardly a rare event in our world – the human species may actually confront a deeper truth about itself. And the truth is that men and women in every society are easily drawn into the state of rigid belief. It is a fulfilment that people everywhere seem to be waiting for, even when unaware they are doing so.

Messianic exploiters

The human need for absolute faith has been reiterated over and over during this century. Since World War Two many have seen it as a crucial issue of the age, and several methods have been used to try to understand it. One is to examine each mass movement in its own context. When viewed through this lens, Hitler's Third Reich, Mao's Cultural Revolution, Khomeini's Jihad and the resurgence of Christian fundamentalism all appear to be the result of unique social and historical circumstances.

This method has the value of demystifying such events. There is nothing supernatural about great numbers believing

totally in a religion, an ideology, a sacred text, or the leaders who skilfully intertwine them. Both the impulse to unbending faith and the rise of messianic figures eager to exploit it are integral in the shaping of human civilization.

A second method is to search for psychological flaws in those who join mass movements. The assumption here is that the 'fever' of absolute faith is indeed a disease – a mental disease that can be diagnosed and even treated in Freudian terms. But how valid is this Western model of the psyche when applied, say, to understanding the Chinese mind? The philosophies that have shaped the modern Chinese character have radically different notions about the individual's role in

their own words...

'It would be better to destroy every other book ever written, and save just the first three verses of Genesis.'

THE US FUNDAMENTALIST WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

society. Any outside observer must be at least aware that she or he is always interpreting the world in terms of a particular construction; and the Freudian model is only one of many.

While essential to human understanding, such models are at best metaphors. But regardless of whether one is a Western psychologist or a Chinese farmer, the tendency to see the metaphor as reality is very common. We create such mental constructions, fix them in words, and then believe in the verbal construct more ardently than in the questing intelligence that created it. This plays a major role in mass movements. In this way Freudianism itself can become a fundamentalism.

The collective swoon

Language, the instrument of our ascent beyond the animal world, proves more often to be the tool with which we rationalize, then chronicle, our periodic declines. Like Kafka's Gregor Samsa, who wakes one morning to find he's become a bug, we can articulate quite well the process that returns us now and then to the primal condition. But our eloquence cannot stop the metamorphosis from occurring again and again.

Is the collective swoon into fanatical belief really so dreadful? That depends on who you ask, or maybe on who wins the holy war. The Daughters of the American Revolution would have one answer; survivors of the Nazi Holocaust another. Eric Hoffer ends his probing portrait of *The True Believer* by acknowledging this paradox. He agrees with those who have said that fanaticism, a product of the Judeo-Christian era, is also one of the most important human inventions. How strange, he concludes, 'that in receiving this malady of the soul the world also received a miraculous instrument for rais-

ing societies and nations from the dead – an instrument of resurrection.'

Mass movements have their dangers but there is also the threat posed by the opposite extreme. The French sociologist Emile Durkheim defined both excesses in studying the various causes of suicide. The 'altruistic' suicide chosen by the Christian martyr or the Japanese kamikaze pilot may strike us as the result of 'insufficient individuation'. A lurid example occurred in 1978 at Jonestown, Guyana, where more than 900 people drank poison on command from their charismatic leader, Jim Jones. But Durkheim also saw the potential for 'egoistic' suicides stemming from excessive individualism. If a mass movement provides one kind of suicide, whether real or metaphorical, so too does an alienated being who has broken all ties with the values of the community.

Somewhere between these extremes, and never totally safe from either, lies the ideal dynamic society. Comparing even relatively healthy places with this ideal reveals how hard it is to realize, let alone maintain. Minneapolis, the 'liberal' city where I live, would seem an unlikely place to spawn fanatic belief. But people here are not immune to the deeper reflexes that lure so many others into holy causes.

Take the widespread local enthusiasm for the 'Minnesota Model,' a system for treating drug dependency that mixes psychological rhetoric with the 12-step, Christian-based guide to life endorsed by Alcoholics Anonymous. Its popularity continues to grow, despite the fact that the system contradicts many of the region's older liberal values. It certainly gives less credit to human nature, as suggested in the



Children at Ku Klux Klan rally in Tennessee.

famous 12 steps that shape Alcoholics Anonymous and its many spinoffs. A condensed version of the 12 steps might read:

Given that our lives are unmanageable and that we are powerless, we turn our will over to a Power greater than ourselves, also known as Him. By praying only for knowledge of His will for us, we wait for Him to remove our shortcomings. Once we've had our spiritual awakening, we spread the message and practise it in all our affairs.

This paraphrase contains no mention of alcohol, but it does highlight the submissive posture demanded from adherents. It also reveals the similarity between this Christian-based credo and those

professed by other religious mass movements. If one fed such statements into a computer and asked it to produce a generic version stripped of all cultural and historical idiosyncracies, this might well be the result. Believers everywhere could recognize it. The followers of Jim Jones, for instance, might have said the same about their relation to the patriarchal deity-despot they knew as 'Dad.'

A theological fantasy

My point is not to criticize those who find solace or strength in such systems. It is to suggest how easily our obedience to holy words can lead to what VS Naipaul, in his study of modern Islamic fundamentalism, calls the 'phantasmagoric quality' of life 'among the believers'. The wish of the Islamic fundamentalist, he writes, is to work back to 'a whole', to a utopia that existed in an imaginary past, by using the 'tools of faith alone – belief, religious practices and rituals'. Both intellect and one's sense of history must be suppressed to realize this 'theological fantasy'. And to some degree that describes the fundamentalist impulse in general.

Naipaul is often criticized as the epitome of the Western interloper, whose judgements about other peoples are too firmly rooted in his own cultural bias. But the honest observer trying to understand the nature of absolute faith must in the end acknowledge that Western democracies, while hardly invulnerable to absolute faith, do offer a degree of protection from it.

These defences are maintained at quite a cost. The opposing ethic of individualism can also turn malignant – and often does. But reformers who have thought that life might be improved in the West by somehow excising rampant individualism must consider the fact that such surgery could have hidden dangers. Those seeking social change may actually get what they are looking for – and unleash the juggernaut of absolute faith in the process.

Change creates uncertainty and confusion, both of which most people dread, and both of which are quickly 'cured' by a resurgence of absolute conviction. Consider the recent rise of nationalism, ethnic violence and religious fervour throughout the former Soviet empire. Or consider the people closer to home. Who couldn't find the same irrational absolutism at work in their own communities, if not in their own minds?

I have reason to think that life is full of ambivalence and contradiction; I also know that maintaining this awareness is like dealing constantly with the fact of one's inevitable death. It is fitting, then, that total faith in some figure or idea is the only way to escape both issues and to go on living with the certainty that life will last forever – or perhaps never existed at all. □

Jeremiah Creedon is a regular contributor to the NI based in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Photo: C Smith/Impact

Simply...

THE FUNDAMENTALS



LOYALTY TO SCRIPTURE

Is it in the book?

THE notion that everything in the Qu'ran or the Bible is literally true and must be obeyed is a firmly held belief of religious fundamentalists. A similar absolute faith in the economic and political prescriptions of books

like Karl Marx's *Capital* for communists or George Gilder's *Poverty and Wealth* for militant free-marketeers marks secular fundamentalist belief. Power within such groups derives from the ability to quote scripture to make one's point. The multitude of possible interpretations and contradictory passages provide fertile ground for endless dispute over the meaning of the text and split-offs to set up new groups of 'true believers'.



BELIEF IN APOCALYPSE

Five minutes to midnight

THERE are many fundamentalist versions of the Day of Judgment. Race wars, nuclear holocaust, total environmental collapse, an Aids plague, economic collapse under a mountain of debt, cultural decadence and decay are all held up as possible scenarios for the undoing of the wickedness of this world. In this

way the fundamentalist transforms real problems and world issues into a satisfying catastrophe in which the sinners – atheists, socialists, liberals, the promiscuous, homosexuals, secular humanists, greedy consumers – finally get theirs. According to some versions of apocalypse the righteous are saved by the timely return of Jesus or Muhammad. Eco-survivalists, meanwhile, save themselves by abandoning corrupt civilization to set up pure communities as far as possible from the sources of pollution.

INTOLERANCE OF DISSENT

Casting out the unbeliever

THE fundamentalists' certainty in the rightness of their cause leads them to a condescending view of the outsider or non-believer that wavers between pity and hostility. The view of the in-group is that their special insight gives them the right to dictate to others so as to reform their thoughts and deeds. Censorship of 'unhealthy' books and films is a key plank in the fundamentalist platform aimed particularly at the politically or sexually unorthodox. For the militant free marketeer economic policy must penalize those who use the public purse to avoid the rigours of hard work. While on the Left the heretic is cast out or sometimes cast into prison for their bourgeois mentality. Extensive 're-education' is necessary to bring the unconverted and wayward to the true path. The insecurity of the faithful is seen in their preoccupation with hunting out heresy.



AUTHORITARIANISM

An eye for an eye

FUNDAMENTALIST groups often have strict charismatic leaders, stern father figures who lay down the rules for their members. Fundamentalists reject leniency and believe that wrong-doers or even non-believers should be severely dealt with. Where they achieve some degree of influence the fundamentalists usually push for an authoritarian form of government that will enforce restrictive codes of behaviour on non-believers. In the US the fundamentalist movement has been one of the main backers of the return to the death penalty now in place in a majority of states. Under Shari'a law there are a wide range of severe sanctions including amputations, flogging and death by stoning. For the free-market fundamentalist the main crime is lack of initiative and laziness. The punishment is to make poverty (sometimes said to be an 'incentive') more acute by cutting off welfare cheques.



RIGHT LIVING

Protecting us from ourselves

FUNDAMENTALISTS tend to be very prescriptive about lifestyle and personal habits both for their own members and the rest of us as well. In Islam the strict adherence to Shari'a law contains a number of prohibitions around liquor, sexual freedom, abortion, dress, and living arrangements enforced by a rigorous criminal code. These are meant to apply to non-Muslims living in the country as well. In Sudan, which has a huge non-Muslim population, the enforcement of Shari'a is one cause of civil war.

The fundamentalist Christian social agenda is very similar to that of Islam with a tight family-centred approach leading to campaigns to restrict the rights to abortion, to different sexual preferences or even to unconventional living arrangements. The zealots of both the New Right and the Old Left also glorify the nuclear family unit as the root of social stability.



PESSIMISM

Doom, gloom and magic

DESPITE their absolute certainty about what is right and wrong with the world the overwhelming mood of most fundamentalists is pessimistic. They wring their hands over the devil's work: the free-spending welfare state, the lack of discipline amongst the young or the evils of TV and strong drink. The world is held to be in the hands of the ungodly

and hope for redemption seems quite slim. Even in Iran, where fundamentalism is very much in the saddle, the prevailing mentality is of a group under siege by the forces of the modern world. Fundamentalists of all types feel very much on the defensive in a world that they cannot control or even explain very well. The best hope for worldly redemption lies beyond the realm of politics in a magical second coming, a cathartic night at the revolutionary barricades or a purifying collapse of the global eco-system.



TOTALISM

We can explain it all!

FUNDAMENTALISTS are obsessed with their philosophy which they feel is a total explanation for all that is wrong with the world and a complete prescription for setting it right. Marxism-Leninism has purported to explain away genetics and fundamentalist Christianity to explain away evolution. The experience and previous knowledge of the

individual is submerged under the ocean of doctrine. If your feelings do not accord it is because you have a bourgeois mentality, are male-identified or are being influenced by the Devil. The thought-terminating cliché bludgeons individuals into submission to the group. They are encouraged to purge any feelings and characteristics that are identified with impure outsiders. They are thus made vulnerable enough to accept the discipline of the group and its leaders.

Fundamentally female

Fundamentalism usually keeps women in their place. But Celia Kitzinger argues that feminism may be spawning its own equivalent.

AT a feminist conference in Arizona earlier this year, I took time off from workshops on bonding rituals, ecological engagement, midlife rites and dances for spiritual renewal to look around the exhibits. The craft stalls were selling crystals with magic powers, menstrual goddesses made of red clay, and meditation stones 'to hold full moon aspirations'. The bookstalls were crammed with self-help books on wise-women lore, mystic herbalism, reincarnation, auras, witchcraft and psychology manuals urging me to get in touch with my real self, heal my inner child, and reclaim the powers of the Great Mother within.

Dizzy with this concentrated and relentless insistence on my untapped female potential, I decided to turn down an invitation to attend a women's healing circle in which participants 'share herstories, rituals and healing dreams, reclaim the loving power of the goddess, bloom forth in the eternal dance of cosmic circles renewal', with facilitator Sonia Ganz PhD. Ganz describes herself as 'Keeper of the Flame, weaving her Golden Net of Great Mystery and Magic ... she calls and invokes the Wise Woman Within You'.

Although it flourishes best in the individualistic hothouse of affluent North American culture, this type of matriarchal feminism crops up in Britain too. In the classified ads sections of feminist magazines women's spirituality and psychic development workshops vie for space

with New Age therapies – a 'Feminist Shaman Healer offers a Snake Power Weekend Workshop' or a 'Neo-Reichian psychodynamic therapist with spiritual orientation' sells her therapeutic wares. The Women's Peace Movement worldwide draws on some of the same images of the power of women's creative and nurturing bodies, of our uniquely female connectedness with Mother Nature – in touch with the cycles of the moon, the seasons, and all life on this planet. The female spiritual values of care and connection are contrasted sharply with men's fear of intimacy and the male values of competition and domination.

It's seductive, this heady mix of feminist pop-psychology, spirituality, witchcraft and goddess-worship, and it's important to understand why it appeals to so many women. Much feminist writing focuses on women only in relation to our oppression, as victims or survivors of abuses men have perpetrated against us. But these images of female victimization and helplessness are replaced by a celebration of women's power and potential when we 'discover' ancient gynocracies and venerated goddesses. Suddenly we white Western women can remember (or invent) our own empowering symbols to replace the whiteman god, to give us a

sense of tradition and a place in the cosmic order of things.

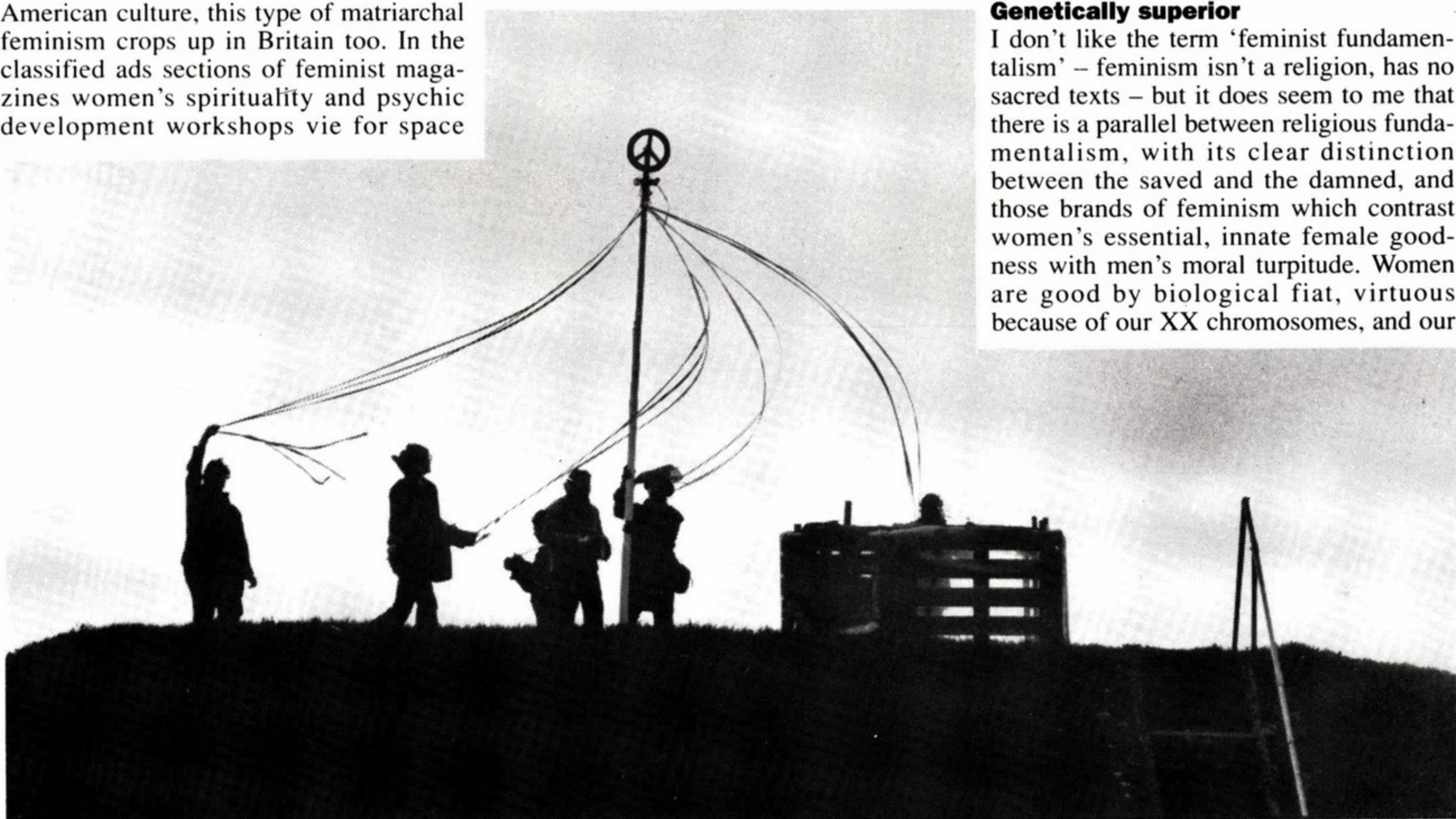
In defiance of a male-supremacist world which shrouds menstruation in shame, medicalizes childbirth and talks of women's bodies with contempt and loathing, we honour the power of our own bulging, bleeding, gestating, labouring and lactating bodies. We make links among women across centuries when we reclaim the herbal wisdom of the eighteenth-century midwife or the spiritual powers of the mediaeval witch. And we make links across cultures when we recognize our sisterhood with women of other nations and ethnicities and draw on their symbols and rituals, their traditional crafts and skills.

Refusing to be divided and conquered, we replace mother-blaming with veneration for motherhood and the Great Mother, replace patriarchal fear of old women with positive images of the wise Crone. Reclaiming our power as women, celebrating that which is uniquely female, this type of feminism inspires, invigorates and seems to offer more than merely a politics of opposition.

Most important of all, I think, this type of feminism invites us to speak of ethical concerns. It urges us to consider our basic moral values and goals as feminists, and to imagine the kind of world we want to create. And for these very reasons, we need to consider more carefully the underlying assumptions upon which such theories are based. Implicit or explicit in much of this literature is the assumption that women are, by biological definition, morally or spiritually superior.

Genetically superior

I don't like the term 'feminist fundamentalism' – feminism isn't a religion, has no sacred texts – but it does seem to me that there is a parallel between religious fundamentalism, with its clear distinction between the saved and the damned, and those brands of feminism which contrast women's essential, innate female goodness with men's moral turpitude. Women are good by biological fiat, virtuous because of our XX chromosomes, and our



Women demonstrators dance around the maypole on top of a weapons silo at a military base in the UK: the women's peace movement draws worldwide strength from an image of the nurturing female close to nature which it counterposes to militaristic masculinity.

reproductive capacity. Women are the genetically superior race.

We should, in this post-Holocaust era, know the dangers of biological determinist arguments like this. When others gen-



Past power: early Ethiopian goddess image.

erate parallel arguments we are ready to challenge them – eager to disprove the notion that boys are ‘naturally’ more mathematical than girls, that heterosexuals are biologically superior to homosexuals, or that white people are innately more intelligent than black people. How is it, then, that some feminists still feel able to draw on biological determinist arguments (sometimes using research ‘evidence’ culled from the most oppressive of male theorists) to claim that women are naturally, biologically, innately, superior to men?

According to Elizabeth Gould Davis, author of *The First Sex*: ‘Maleness remains a recessive genetic trait like colour-blindness and haemophilia, with which it is linked. The suspicion that maleness is abnormal and that the Y chromosome is an accidental mutation boding no good for the race is strongly supported by the recent discovery by geneticists that congenital killers and criminals are possessed of not one but *two* Y chromosomes, bearing a double dose, as it were, of genetically undesirable maleness.’

According to this argument, biology is destiny. Men’s violence is the inevitable result of the Y chromosomes (therefore outside their control and responsibility), and women are biologically pre-programmed to be nice.

Biological explanations of ‘female nature’ ignore the social and political structures which shape that ‘nature’. There is no uniquely feminine essence, existing above and beyond social conditioning, which makes us creative, empathetic, intuitive, nurturant, nonviolent and at one with Mother Earth. It is worrying to find feminists reiterating the virtues traditionally assigned to Western women – including defining us in terms of our capacity to give birth.

In *The Once and Future Goddess*, Elinor Gadon says: ‘I believe that women’s wombs are their power centres,

not just symbolically but in physical fact. When we say we act from our guts, for our deepest instincts, this is what we are speaking of.’

The infertile woman, the woman who undergoes hysterectomy, one who chooses abortion, the lesbian who refuses heterosexuality and motherhood – are we deemed incapable of spiritual power and insight because we do not use our wombs as Nature is supposed to have intended? Attempting to revalue motherhood, these feminists reinforce and revere the myth of the ‘maternal instinct’. The dangers of this should be obvious – motherhood is an enforced identity for women, even by default: the terms ‘childless man’ and ‘nonfather’ sound absurd and irrelevant. Glorification of the Great Mother fails to address the enormous ambivalence many of us feel about our own mothers (and about our role as mothers). And it is often curiously unrelated to any political action which might help women with the far from glamorous everyday problems of being real live mothers.

Flaunting the goddess

Therapeutic language demanding that we look within for the source of our power – our ‘authentic natural female self’, ‘the inner child’, a free spirit untouched by social oppression – ignores the political structuring of the self. In a hostile political climate, it is easy to see why an oppressed group might lay claim to ‘internal’ spiritual or magical power. Generally this power is understood to be figurative rather than literal: we cannot stop rape, murder, sexual abuse or oppressive legislation simply by flaunting the symbol of the goddess.

But when women’s personal power is

their own words...

‘God represents the necrophilia of patriarchy, whereas Goddess affirms the life-loving being of women and nature.’

MARY DALY IN GYN ECOLOGY

seen in literal terms, it leads, logically enough, to victim-blaming: if you’re so powerful then whatever happens is your own fault. This reaches its most absurd and terrifying proportions in the self-help literature claiming that ‘we are each 100-per-cent responsible for all of our experience ... we create every so-called “illness” in our body’: if you have cancer it’s because you hate yourself, AIDS because you suffer from sexual guilt, and you can cure yourself through the power of positive thinking.

This form of feminism promises a glorious future for those prepared to believe in the goddess within and claim their own spiritual power. In protesting against its assumptions it is easy to feel like a spoilsport, restricting feminist politics to a gloomy recital of male abuses. It seems terribly pedestrian to insist upon an

examination of the material realities of women’s oppression, the actual structural and political possibilities for transformation. And yet this, I believe, is what is necessary – and matriarchal, biologically determinist, psychobabble-style feminism is obstructive of that enterprise.

It is not useful to naturalize history, or to biologize the social phenomena through which our oppression is expressed: this serves only to obscure the political processes at work. It is unhelpful to disguise the social and political sources of power by focussing on internal personal power. It is destructive to sentimentalize women in other cultures or to romanticize women of past eras.

No women, no men

Just beneath the attractive surface of this brand of feminism lurk all too often the reactionary implications of biological determinism. Instead of simply inverting the idea that ‘female is bad’ with a feminist version of ‘female is good’, we need to step outside of this debate and challenge patriarchal definitions of ‘men’ and ‘women’.

Perhaps, as some radical feminists suggest, we need to jettison the concept of ‘woman’ altogether, on the grounds that it is not a natural given but a political (patriarchal) category. Just as the concept of ‘race’ was constructed only with the socio-economic reality of black slavery, so too the concept of ‘women’ functions only as marker of otherness and subordination. In selecting and glorifying those aspects of the ‘myth of woman’ that look good, these feminists are still imprisoned in the categories of sex, in the idea that there is a ‘natural’ division between women and men which has always existed, and always will exist.

As Monique Wittig argues: ‘The function of difference is to mask at every level the conflicts of interest, including ideological ones. In other words, for us, this means there cannot any longer be women and men, and that as classes and as categories of thought or language they have to disappear, politically, economically, ideologically ... Can we redress *slave*? Can we redeem *nigger*, *negress*? How is *woman* different?’

In struggling against male supremacy we cannot afford to be diverted into celebrating our culture of oppression or ‘reclaiming’ the traits associated with our persecution. Eschewing a celebration of our bondage, we need to engage in explicitly political struggle to end it. □

Celia Kitzinger is a freelance writer who teaches psychology in London.

1 *The First Sex*, Elizabeth Gould Davis (Penguin 1973). 2 *The Once and Future Goddess: A Symbol of Our Times*, Elinor W Gadon (Harper & Row 1989). 3 *You Can Heal Your Life*, Louise Hay (Eden Grove 1984). 4 Monique Wittig ‘One is Not Born a Woman’, reprinted in *For Lesbians Only: A Separatist Anthology*, edited by Sarah Lucia Hoagland and Julia Penelope (Onlywomen Press 1981).

WOMEN

Invisible

Figures ignore work done by women

IF statistics are to be believed, women are disappearing from economic activity in several countries. Those who do unpaid family work are becoming 'invisible'.

According to a study by the International Labour Office (ILO)¹ there is a two-thirds decline in women's employment in Algeria and Cape Verde and a 50-per-cent drop in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Honduras and the Maldives. In industrialized countries, only West Germany has registered a decline.

In the agricultural sector, where women are traditionally active, women are simply not being counted. This shows up in the astonishing declines in female agricultural employment in national censuses conducted since 1945. Algeria leads the pack with women's share down to a mere one per cent from 37 per cent. But more than one million women work in agricul-

ture in Algeria – unpaid workers on family farms have been excluded from the statistics.

Unpaid family workers are becoming increasingly 'invisible' in 62 of the 83 countries surveyed. Entrepreneurs apparently operate without the assistance of family members, particularly in France, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Not counting women's contribution to the agricultural, industrial and service sectors distorts the productivity of enterprises in these sectors. Excluding family members from recognized economic activity in family farms and businesses gives the illusion of one-man operations. The end result is that planning is distorted and investment is misdirected away from where the workers are. Not counting women who work in agriculture, for example, exaggerates any relative increase in employment in the industrial and service sectors. This in turn may lead to women being neglected in development strategies. Sounds familiar.

1 Year Book of Labour Statistics: Retrospective Edition on Population Censuses: 1945-1989



Burden of hard labour: carried by women, lost by statistics.

Photo: Mark Edwards

AFRICA

Crossfire

Zambians caught in Angola conflict

ASUDDEN crackling and a shattering roar; pounding and rumbling thunders on a trembling earth; waves and billows of rising black smoke; buildings crumbling on twisted bodies; muffled cries, pain, death.

This is how the few people who have stayed in the Zambian village of Chingi describe the fighting between the Angolan government and Jonas Savimbi's Unita rebels.

I am sitting on a boulder with two local guides and we are all nervous. Tom Kakoma has remained in Chingi solely to look after his ageing parents. 'Don't worry,' he said, 'they fought just last week. It'll probably be quiet for a few weeks now.'

Kalipande, the small Angolan border town perching on the shores of the Zambezi River, two miles from Zambia, is a crucial zone for Unita. It is an important conduit for the food supplies needed by their starving rebels and holding on to it shows their strength to the outside world.

The MPLA government is just as keen to take it over, for exactly the same reasons.

Chitengi Malasha, whose father died in the crossfire, said: 'No-one is in total control. They keep booting each other out. It's terrible for Zambians living

here.' Even if anyone did have control, all that is left now is a heap of ruins. Kalipande is a visibly lifeless town.

More than 5,000 Zambians have fled the border area since the clashes began in the late 1970s. At least 6,000 Angolans

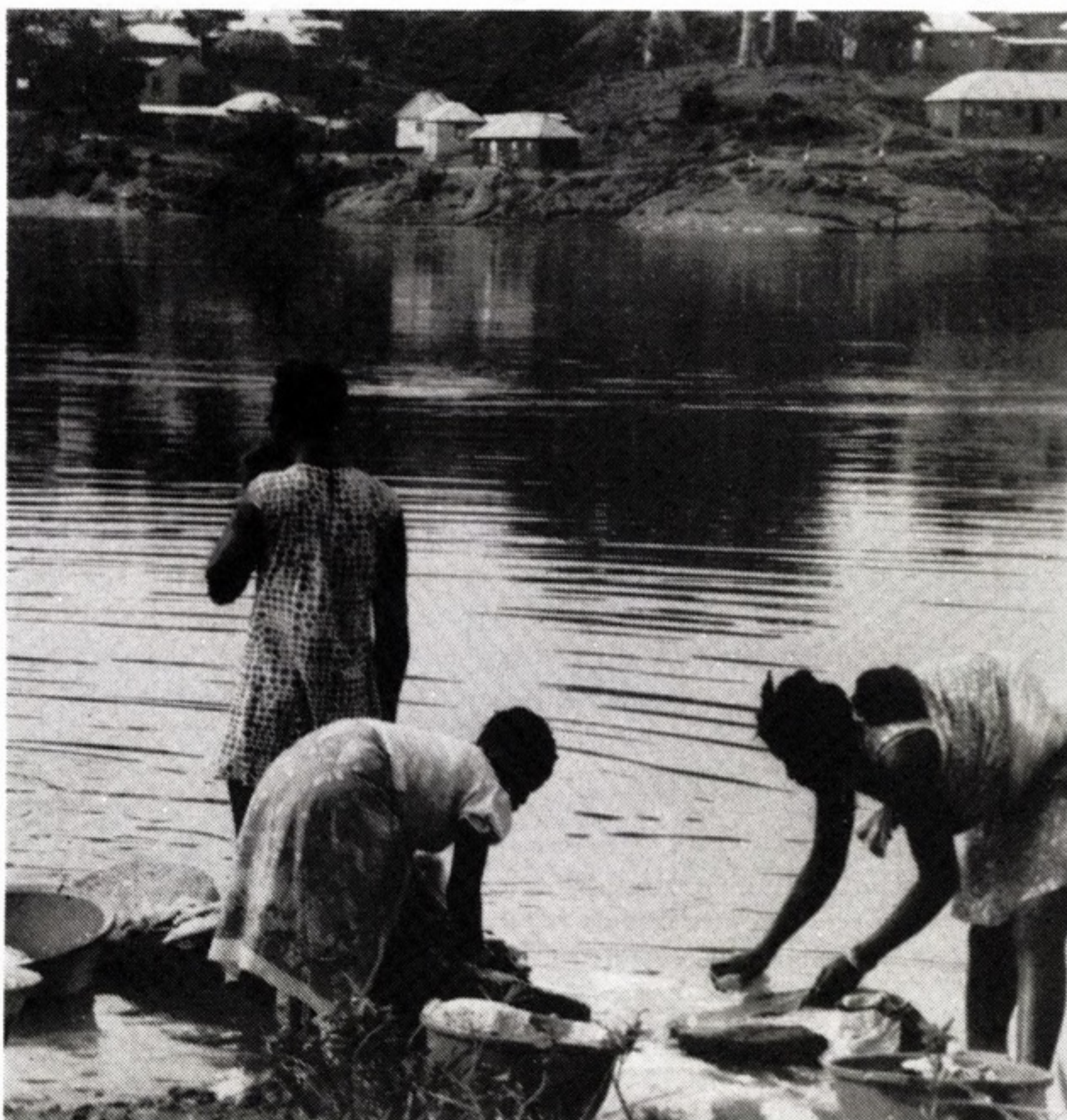
took refuge in Zambia after a recent clash. The north-western region already holds some 16,000 refugees at Meheba Camp and about 14,000 others are living among local villagers.

Henry Steiner, a senior member of the International Red Cross Committee, on a recent visit to the war zone, faced 20 Zambians who had lost limbs in the fighting. The Red Cross aims to provide artificial limbs for those who have been maimed and material support for scores of others displaced by the fighting.

Meanwhile no Chingi resident dares to cultivate a field or take a bath in the waters of the Zambezi in daylight. As a customs officer explained: 'Those who tried before never came back. We fear landmines or thug rebels taking a shot at us'.

Five years ago bananas were common and cheap. Today they are a luxury. Most farmers have stopped gardening and left. A local official said: 'Kalipande is only one town among many. So you can imagine the suffering of Zambians everywhere. Even when the war is over, the damage will have been done.'

Elias Nyakutemba



Bathers beware: the unquiet water of the Zambezi River in Angola.

Photo: Hewett/UNICEF

FINANCE

Broke

Indian farmers win debt battle

AN organization of small farmers in India, the Shetkari Sanghatna, has over the past decade progressed from agitations and blockades to moving the country's highest court and winning a reprieve from debt.

It is standard practice in almost all parts of the country for small-scale cultivators to take loans from banks, co-operatives and moneylenders. Farmers hope to recover their investment if the harvest is good and fetches a desirable price at the markets. But somehow this never happens, for even if the crop is good the profits end up in the pockets of those who control the wholesale and distribution network.

The farmers found their debts mounting until they reached a point where they could no longer satisfy their creditors with the repayments after harvests. Even the co-operative agencies began confiscating their produce.

The moneylenders were even less subtle. With the protection of gangsters and even the police, they began to seize houses, jewellery, cattle and farms, sometimes throwing out the owners.

The first concern was to protect the farmers from harassment and safeguard their property. Advocate Sharad Bobde of Nagpur struck upon the idea of filing insolvency petitions in the courts.

By December 1988, 620,000 farmers from four Northern states had flooded the courts with their petitions. Within three months the Supreme Court had issued an order restraining the co-operative societies, the development banks and other creditors from forcibly collecting debts owed to them by the petitioners.

The Government, too, reconsidered the situation and wrote off loans over 20 years old worth 2.2 billion rupees (\$107 million).

This victory of the farmers, besides being the first of its kind in the country, was also totally nonviolent – unlike previous debt agitations. Equally remarkable was the speed at which it managed to prod the normally sluggish long arm of the law.

Ajoy Chaudhari/Third World Network

KENYA

Shaved

Storm grows as beard goes

A BEARD is at the centre of a nationwide legal row in Kenya that has involved nearly everyone from a local school-teacher to the President himself.

Fred Mwango, a former district commissioner in Kiambu district near Nairobi, ordered Joseph Mwaura, a respected primary-school head teacher, to 'dry shave' his treasured beard in the presence of armed police. Mwaura nicked himself several times because he had no water or soap and no mirror either. The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) have condemned Mwango's action.

'You look like a he-goat,' Mwango is reported to have told Mwaura following an argument over the closure of a trouble-torn African Independent Pentecostal Church. He claimed that growing a beard was against public-



Bearded Kenyatta is no example.

service regulations and ordered the teacher to remove it.

The press were not slow to make the story front-page news. Meanwhile bearded Kenyans are singled out as radicals, though Jomo Kenyatta, the founding father of Kenya, wore one himself. Present President Moi (who sports a baby-smooth chin) tried to defuse the growing row by asserting that teachers have the right to keep beards. But he warned that lice should not be allowed to turn them into

breeding grounds.

Even so, the Teacher's Service Commission, the teachers' employer, reopened the issue recently by threatening to dismiss Mwaura unless he shaved his sprouting beard, apologized to Mwango and withdrew the lawsuit they had filed against him.

Stopping aggrieved parties going to court is nothing new in Kenya. Kenya has suffered untold embarrassments at the hands of erratic administrators who operate beyond reach of the law. Recently people were arrested for not attending a public rally, a car owner was jailed for not offering an official a lift, journalists caned and a wife ordered to shave her husband as a means of settling a domestic dispute. Administrators have powers to order compulsory deductions from civil servants' salaries.

All this looks to be leading up to open confrontation between corrupt and erratic administrators and their public victims.

Paul Amini/Gemini

WATER

Undermined

Bangkok sinking fast

YOU may not have seen it in the headlines just yet but Bangkok is sinking into the sea. As the population passes six million, the huge consumption of water from the city's wells is depleting the supplies of the underground aquifers. Without water pressure to steady them, the sand and clay layers of these water traps are breaking down. As the earth compresses, the city above sinks, making it increasingly vulnerable to flooding.

The worst of it comes with the monsoon rains and tides in October and December which reach as high as 1.35 metres above average sea level. Bangkok is only 1.5 metres above the sea and some districts are sinking by up to 30 centimetres per year.

When tides are high and the rainfall heavy, the Chao Phraya river rises and cannot empty back into the sea. Six centimetres of rain can leave some streets flooded for a day. In 1984, however, things got considerably worse with a flood which lasted four months and caused damage worth \$264 million.

The problem is not confined

to Bangkok. Several cities in Asia are sinking, including towns in Vietnam and Kampuchea, where silt-carrying rivers fan out into deltas as they meet the sea.

But a joint Thai-Canadian engineering team may have found a solution to Bangkok's problem. They are proposing to pump clean treated water drawn from the Chao Phraya, Psek and Suphan rivers upstream of the city, 50 to 600 metres down into the aquifers to stabilize them and stop the land from subsiding.

Researchers at Bangkok's Asian Institute of Technology where this plan has been developed now need \$85,000 to field-test it. But this is relatively cheap when compared to alternative strategies because, as Dr. Prinya of the Institute points out, filling in the lost land could cost about \$5 billion. And then there is the huge cost of recurrent flooding which the plan could put an end to.

Mack Laing/Gemini



Staying afloat in Bangkok: more may have to take to the boats.

ENVIRONMENT

Black holes

Scientists have confirmed that a hole in the ozone layer opened over the North Pole in the winter of 1989. While it is not as large as the better-known hole that occurs annually over the South Pole, they say that all the ingredients are there for a severe ozone depletion in the Arctic.

While significant ozone destruction occurs mainly in the polar holes, the phenomenon can reduce ozone at all latitudes because the amount destroyed at the poles is replenished from the rest of the atmosphere.

From Consumer Currents No 126

TOBACCO

Chinese wheeze

China, with 300 million smokers, is now the world's largest producer and consumer of cigarettes. It was responsible for 29 per cent of total world cigarette consumption in 1988. If current consumption trends continue, an estimated two million Chinese will die each year from tobacco-related illness by the year 2025. Of all the children alive today in

China under the age of 20, 50 million will eventually die from tobacco-caused diseases.

From Fighting the Global Tobacco War, Consumer Lifelines, IOCU

GLOBAL

One world, one village

If our world were a village of 1,000 people, what would its ethnic and religious composition be? Well, in the village there would be:

564 Asians
210 Europeans
86 Africans
80 South Americans
60 North Americans

There would be:

300 Christians (183 Catholics, 84 Protestants, 33 Orthodox)
175 Muslims
128 Hindus
55 Buddhists
47 Animists
210 without any religion or atheist.

Of these people:

60 persons would have half the income
500 would be hungry
600 would live in shanty towns
700 would be illiterate.

From Frères Sans Frontières, quoted in World Development Forum, Vol 8, No 7

ALTERNATIVE TOURISM

America's poor

A San Francisco travel agency has just provided a Third World in America tour in June. For \$500 a head, participants toured the impoverished coal mining areas of Virginia, West Virginia and Tennessee, taking in the hunger and squalor – all without having to bother about a passport.

The tour has ruffled West Virginia commerce commissioner who commented: 'These folks could save a lot of money and get a great dose of Third World reality simply by walking through the *barrio* in Los Angeles'.

From South, No 115

JUNK FOOD

Uuurgh!

Scraps of meat, sinews and cartilage can now be placed in a blood plasma gel overnight and next day the mixture has glued together and looks like steak. The process, developed by the Dutch Institute of Meat Technology, is now being tested by British companies who anticipate 50-per-cent profits from the process.

Although the British Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, David Maclean, says the resulting 'meat' should be labelled to identify it, the UK may have to seek permission from the European Community before imposing any new labelling regulations. Apparently all the ingredients can be found naturally – so labelling is tricky. The press have invented their own label 'super-glue meat'.

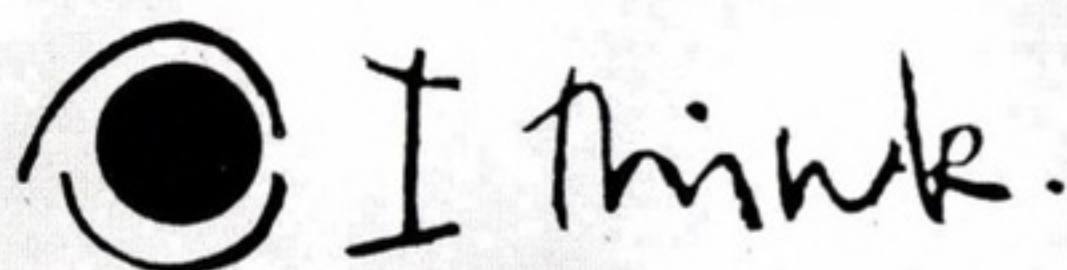
From Agscene, No. 99

CANCER

Sunburn factor

Blistering sunburns during teenage years are an important risk factor for getting melanoma, a skin cancer whose rate is growing faster than any other cancer – according to a study by the New York University School of Medicine. This urged people at risk to understand how to recognise melanoma in its early form, when it is curable. The rise in melanomas is attributable to a depletion of the ozone layer in the earth's atmosphere. In 1935, one in 1,500 people could expect to get melanoma. Today it is one in 120. By the year 2000 the estimate is one in 90.

From Consumer Currents No. 126



by Martyn Turner



The heinous crime of being there

A policeman is killed. Anyone seen anywhere near the crime is guilty. This is not the theme of a novel by Franz Kafka – but the legal system of South Africa. Fourteen people from Uppington are to hang and another 22 are serving long prison sentences. Lydia Nompondwana's husband is one of them. She spoke to the NI.

I AM here to get support for those on Death Row and those imprisoned and also to get financial help for their families. The prisoners are being held in Pretoria and Kimberley so we have to travel long distances to get to see them. Pretoria is 900 kilometres away – so families can only afford to visit twice a month.

Some people think our case happened because the black people of South Africa are protesting violently and just want to go around making trouble. That is not the truth.

Our district, Paballelo, is part of a very poor township, Uppington. There are about 10,000 black people living there. We used to live with the coloured people in the beginning, but in the 1960s we were moved over the railway line and our conditions got a lot worse. There are not enough houses for the people and we don't have electricity or made-up roads. We have a problem with bad drainage – the drains overflow and you can just imagine what goes onto the street. Our people make their living by doing domestic work for white people.

Background to a killing

The main problem that led to the killing of the policeman Jetta Sethwala was high rents. There's no money, so automatically the people got behind with their payments. There were no political organizations then. It's only now, after the arrest of our people, that the youth have started organizing themselves and getting involved in the UDF (United Democratic Front).

For years our town councillors were elected by the Government. The only elections were in late 1984, when Kenneth Kumala was elected Mayor. There were pamphlets distributed in the township. The police went around with loudspeakers and told people there was a sort of reform, that we must be ruled by black councillors. Kenneth was the only person at that time who knew something about politics. We believed he could achieve something for us.

After he was elected a meeting with him was arranged. Some of the old people went to the municipal offices to talk to the Mayor about our problems with paying rent. The meeting was fixed for Sunday 10 November 1985.

The meeting went well and was attended by all the people in the township. As we left people started singing. We found out that the police had been told about the meeting and that they were already in the township. They started to chase people. And that was when the trouble started. People started stoning the police and the police used tear-gas and ran in among us. That made people very angry.

It was the first time anything like this had happened in Paballelo. Even in 1976 when there were lots of riots and strikes all over the country we were not part of it. This was the first time we had felt the effects of tear-gas. It made the whole township angry. A small boy was blinded by a tear-gas canister that exploded near where he was playing. He's still blind now.

A pregnant woman shot

The riots continued from Sunday afternoon through the whole night. Youths set fire to cars that had radios inside them. (Everyone knows it's only the cars of police or police informers that have those radios.) One belonged to a taxi-driver, the other to a teacher.

On Monday afternoon extra police were brought in from nearby towns. There were already too many of them by that time. A young pregnant woman was shot dead that afternoon. The riots went on.

On Tuesday night a police captain arrived from Kimberley. He started talking to a group of youths in King Street – that's one street from mine. He asked them 'Why are you fighting? I'm here in the name of law and order. We come in peace. But if any of you stones us, we

won't play, you know, we are serious. So why don't you talk about your problems? That's the best way to solve them.'

Everybody thought 'Oh gosh! At last, there are white men who are prepared to listen! One of the people now on Death Row translated for the police who was speaking in Afrikaans – he is one of those on Death Row now! People started going around and saying 'Did you hear? The police are prepared to talk. None of us wants a violent situation. I mean, a pregnant woman has already been shot dead.'

So the following morning people started organizing themselves. We decided to have a meeting with the police and then to go back to work afterwards. We could explain to our bosses about the trouble.

The meeting was arranged. We waited for the captain from Kimberley but he didn't turn up. So people started singing the national anthem. We asked a Reverend to say a prayer.

As soon as he said 'Amen' the first tear-gas canister fell. They gave us no time to disperse. The police formed a triangle. There was only one way we could go. People started going into yards to get some water to wash their faces and get rid of the irritation of the tear gas.

The death of Jetta Sethwala

Now, we don't hate policemen. It's their way of dominating people that makes them very unpopular. It's their

behaviour when they are in that uniform and they know the law is on their side.

You had to go past Jetta Sethwala's house to get out of the meeting. People started going into his yard to get water. He panicked. He shot two bullets through the window into the crowd. A nine-year-old boy was hit and paralysed. Everybody started stoning Jetta's house. He ran out and tried to get to the place where the other police were. He turned back and fired another shot into the crowd. That frightened the people. Justice Bekebeke got into a fight with him. He overpowered the policeman and beat him with his rifle. That was what killed Jetta. Justice made a confession in court, admitting that he was the one responsible.

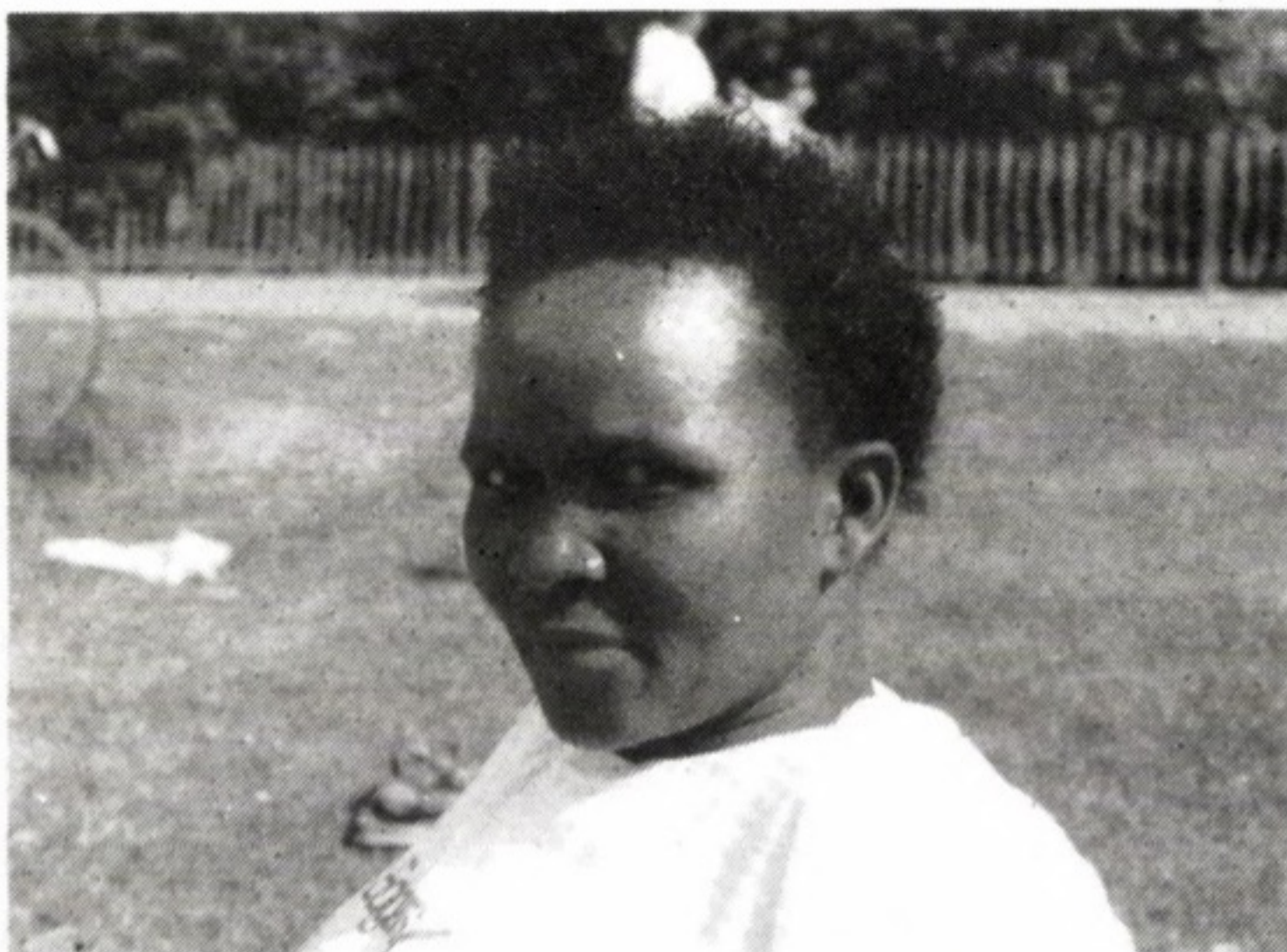
But the 'common purpose' law was used against us as it was used against the Sharpeville Six. That made all the people who were even seen there killers. We couldn't understand it. If the family who were in Jetta's house saw you, you were a killer. That's what happened to my husband Enoch – he was just coming back from work.

And it is what happened to Evelina de Bruin – the only woman on Death Row in South Africa. She only went in to Jetta's yard to use his tap. When he refused she went to the people in the house opposite. They gave her some water and she went home – long before Jetta was killed. She is an old woman. We are very concerned about her.

It seems to us they are using the 'common purpose' law to frighten people so they won't get involved. Even now, when we come back from visiting the prisoners, our own families don't want to get involved, they are frightened. And since the killing of Jetta, the police have shot dead nine people. Not one has been charged or is on Death Row. They have even been promoted. They are still among us in the township.

I must add that we have not seen any real improvements since the unbanning of the ANC. If anything the attitude of the authorities has got worse. I'll give you an example. Recently the police ran over my dog. He was badly injured and in great pain so I went to the police station and asked them to come and shoot him. The police replied: 'Go and ask Mandela to do it ...'

Letters of support and donations can be sent to the Uppington 36 via City Group Anti-Apartheid, BM Box City AA, London WC1 3XX, UK. Letters of protest can be sent to Mr FW De Klerk, President of South Africa, Government Buildings, Pretoria, South Africa.





Black Rain: the human cost of Hiroshima through Japanese eyes.



Black Rain

directed by Shohei Imamura

Not to be confused with the Michael Douglas police thriller of the same name, this adaptation of the Masuji Ibuse novel is both clinical and compassionate in its gauging of the human cost of the 1945 Hiroshima atomic bomb. Shot in a stark, cold black and white and shifting in time between 1945 and 1950, the focus is on one family living and slowly dying in the aftermath of science-led Armageddon.

Middle-aged Shigematsu (Kazuo Kitamura) and his young niece Yasuko (Yoshiko Tanaka) aren't caught in the direct nuclear blast but are contaminated by the 'black rain' of highly radioactive debris which follows it. Five years later he's vainly attempting to arrange a marriage for her – no potential husband will believe that she hasn't been tainted by the catastrophe.

What follows is a harrowing but also strangely lyrical testament to the irreversible after-effects of nuclear attack. Yasuko's hair comes out in her hands as she looks at herself in the mirror; Shigematsu stoically contemplates his own inevitable death while fishing by the river bank; a shell-shocked veteran of conventional warfare loudly imagines enemy tanks coming up the hill (perhaps the film's only uncertain note); and over the radio a news report tells of the US threat to use the Bomb again in the ongoing Korean conflict.

There are graphic scenes here showing petrified human charcoal and a city transformed into flaming matchwood. But the spectacular nature of the blast itself is not overstressed. Where **Black Rain** succeeds is rather in the deceptively calm intimacy of its expression of loss and lost innocence. The standard mili-

tary and political conundrum – was Japan already on the brink of surrender? – is left to one side. Instead the emphasis is on the sheer physical truth of ruined lives, uncomprehending faces and dignity in the shadow of a lingering death.

Powerful, uncompromising and very persuasive.

Politics ★★★★★

Entertainment ★★★★★

Triumph of the Spirit

directed by Robert M Young

This is the true story of an Auschwitz concentration-camp inmate who managed to survive by boxing in a series of over 200 win-or-die contests laid on for the 'entertainment' of the camp's SS guards. As played by Willem Dafoe, the Greek-Jewish Salomo Arouch is a credibly gaunt, anguished figure and the fact that the film was actually shot on location at the real Auschwitz adds a further dimension of authenticity.

The methodical insanity of the camp ethos is also very capably expressed: a rigidly hierarchical system of slave labour and assembly-line murder where the barest scrap of food was a luxury, where overseer inmates known as Kapos were driven into enforcing discipline just as viciously as their Nazi masters and where making some kind of amoral accommodation with the authorities offered the only (albeit remote) prospect of survival.

So far so good. But the movie has serious flaws. Whenever it touches on Salomo's relationships with his also-imprisoned father and girlfriend, for example, the film shifts repeatedly into an emotionally manipulative and far too tidy TV mini-series mode. Perhaps it is impossible to convey adequately the horrors of the Nazi genocide in the inevitably sanitized form of a movie drama. But **Triumph of the Spirit** so emphatically wants to live up to the optimism

of its title that the grotesque, degrading camp rituals often become mere background details to this one man's struggle to survive and protect his loved ones.

Hartmut Becker as the SS officer who organizes the boxing bouts is little more than a forbidding mannequin and no background context at all is given to Salomo's opponents whose 'spirits' are inevitably condemned to death by his 'triumph'.

It would be unfair to call this a concentration-camp *Rocky*. But with survival of the fittest as its literal theme and with such a strong individualist emphasis, an uneasy hint of that American fantasy remains.

Politics ★★☆☆☆

Entertainment ★★☆☆☆



Colombia: Inside the Labyrinth

by Jenny Pearce (Latin America Bureau)

Colombia is supposedly the 'most democratic' of Latin American states. But Jenny Pearce's path through the labyrinth of recent history suggests that the country's sole democratic feature lies in the fact that its authorities allow elections.

The cover lends a hint of what we suspect will follow: tanks rolling in to end the siege of the Palace of Justice in November 1985 when the occupying guerillas, 12 judges and many civilians were killed. The word 'Colombia' walks across

the top of the jacket in bright pink and blue collage letters, adding a note of surrealism to a work on the country whose history Gabriel Garcia Marquez claimed corresponded most closely to the magical realism of his writing.

We are taken through the political and social development of a country which the US regards as its gateway to South America – and we wind up in a situation little different from the past in which an elite group monopolized economic and political power. The authorities continue their suppression of political dissent by utilizing the trained assassin: the *sicario*. It is not uncommon to hear about the assassination of public figures in the streets of Bogota and even running in local elections can ensure a place on some death list. And the emergence of the cocaine barons has helped political bribery to flourish, though the old elites and the new mafia share an uneasy alliance.

Written in a terse, academic style that at times obstructs the true horror of her depictions of bloodshed and rebellion, Pearce offers an invaluable source of information, full of clearly laid out sections and chronological charts. It is a shame that our only access to the experiences of the Colombian people is via the odd journalistic collage, usually lifted from *El Tiempo*, one of the country's Liberal newspapers. The book is certainly authoritative but may well daunt the uncommitted reader by its relentlessly hard-nosed factuality.

Politics ★★★★★

Entertainment ★☆☆☆☆



Inside Auschwitz: Willem Dafoe (centre) in Triumph of the Spirit.

MUSIC

Turn Things Upside Down

by The Happy End (Cooking Vinyl)

In the great pop music scheme of things it is pretty difficult these days to come up with a new concept. Given that pop has pillaged everything from blues to blue-eyed soul, plundered local music from Trinidad to Tanzania, there are few stones (rolling or otherwise) left unturned.

Resuscitating the big-band format of the 1940s and applying

it to modern agit-pop cannot technically be described as a new concept but it is strikingly bold and enterprising nonetheless. The Happy End is a modern wonder of the world, surviving on a small independent label splitting the cheques between 21 band-members (four trumpets, three trombones, eight saxes and assorted others) and still turning out records of rare thoughtfulness and charm.

Turn Things Upside Down is rich in both texture and text. On the title-track, for instance, the Glenn Miller smoothness to the brass is undercut both by Robert Wyatt's ever-plaintive, ever-plangent guest vocals and by a biting lyric from the 1890s that lambasts the idle rich and heralds revolution: 'Plain living

may be wholesome and wondrous virtues may/ Abound beneath ribs scant of flesh and pockets scant of pay/ And it may be poverty is best if rightly understood/ But we'll turn things upside down because we don't want all the good'.

The whole album is rooted in and redolent of a struggling socialist past: there is a song that emerged from the Durham miners' strike of 1889; an intriguing version of *The Red Flag* that veers between elegaic lament and exuberance (the little-known Count Basie arrangement, they say); a characteristically spiky Brecht-Weill song from *The Threepenny Opera*.

But grafted onto that moving element of socialist history are the causes that most animate the internationalist radical of today. There is a song about the great Reagan-Thatcher love affair and 'their bastard love-child SDI'. There is a treatment of the ANC anthem *Nkosi*

Sikelele Afrika which begins sounding pretty much as it will when South Africa wins its next Olympic medal but then jumps into cool jazz. And last but not least there is a *Rhumba for Nicaragua* which poses the most valid of questions. Q: is 42 per cent of the vote an enthusiastic endorsement or a devastating condemnation of a government? A: Depends on whether you live in Britain or Nicaragua (see the *Classic* review below for more on this).

Turn Things Upside Down is imaginative, intelligent and exuberant. Enjoy.

Politics ☆☆☆☆

Entertainment ☆☆☆☆

★ STAR RATING

Excellent	☆☆☆☆
Very good	☆☆☆
Good	☆☆
Fair	☆
Poor	

Reviews editor: Chris Brazier



CLASSIC

Mi Venganza Personal

... being the poem that encapsulated the spirit of the Sandinista revolution

NICARAGUA was the Western Left's greatest cause in the 1980s. Ground down by the politics of greed at home, our eyes turned for inspiration overseas to this tiny country where, for once, a revolution seemed genuinely to be working.

Nicaragua rekindled something of the spirit of the 1930s, a time when the issues were simpler (and more unthinking) for the Left. Just as idealistic volunteers from all over the world signed up then to fight fascism in the Spanish Civil War, so the *internacionalistas* of the 1980s flew out to help defend Nicaragua against the US giant. I did a very short spell myself and will not deny the relish with which I found myself serving alongside a 'Brigada Che Guevara' from Mexico or the sense that I was at the international front line. Except that in these more peace-conscious days we were volunteering not to carry guns but to pick coffee, build schools or plant trees.

*My personal revenge will be the right
Of our children in the schools and in the gardens
My personal revenge will be to give you
This song which has flourished without panic
My personal revenge will be to show you
The kindness in the eyes of my people
Who have always fought relentlessly in battle
And been generous and firm in victory*

In the wake of the Sandinistas' defeat at the ballot box in February it has become fashionable to link that dramatic surprise with the popular uprisings in Eastern Europe. In truth the only similarity between the two is that Washington has got what it wanted. The majority vote against them has not suddenly turned the Sandinistas into the brutal totalitarian dictators that the US has always claimed them to be. Indeed the impeccably democratic way in which they have accepted the election result in some ways destroys Washington's image even more effectively than a second popular mandate would have done.

And it reminds us of the spirit of reconciliation which made the Sandinista revolution so unique. When Tomás Borge wrote **Mi Venganza Personal** it was in the wake of his own torture by the dictator Somoza's National Guard and the death of his wife at their hands.

*My personal revenge will be to tell you
good morning
On a street without beggars or homeless
When instead of jailing you I suggest
You shake away the sadness there that blinds you
And when you who have applied your hands in torture
Are unable to look up at what surrounds you
My personal revenge will be to give you
These hands that once you so mistreated
But have failed to take away their tenderness*

After the Revolution Tomás Borge was to face the ultimate test of his own principles when he became Justice Minister and had to take responsibility for that very National Guard which had tortured him, his family and his comrades. One of the Sandinistas' first acts as a government was to abolish the death penalty; members of the National Guard were instead imprisoned. But they were not locked up in the same prison system over which they had presided but one that was eventually reformed absolutely. Prisoners began in secure jails but progressed through good behaviour into ever more open and humane environments until they ended up visiting their home at weekends and guarding themselves. The principle of rehabilitation which has been all but lost in the Western penal system here came back to life – the belief that for people to behave as humans they have to be treated as humans.

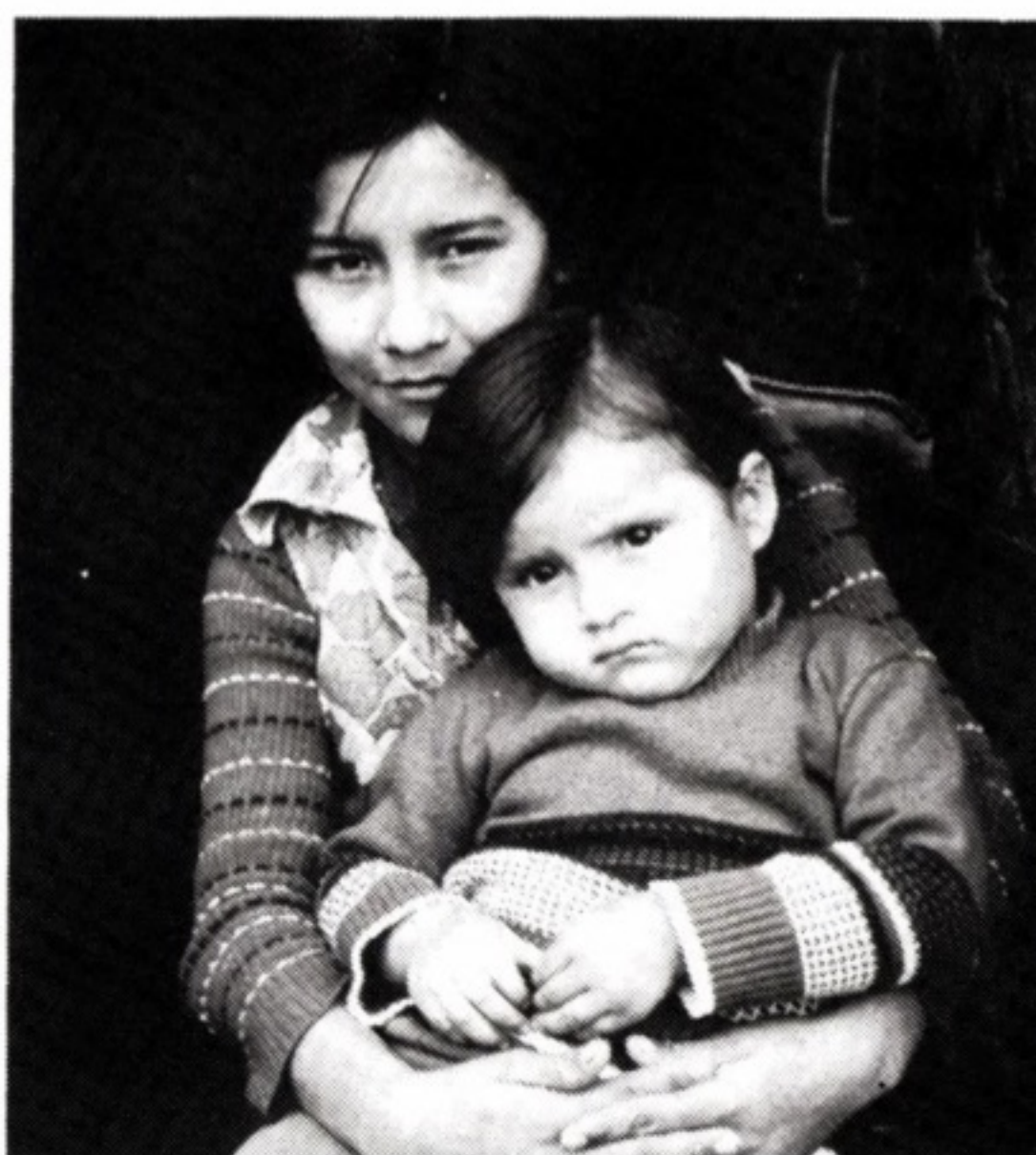
*It was the people who hated you the most
When rage became the language of their song
And underneath the skin of this town today
Its heart has been scarred forevermore
And underneath the skin of this town today
Red and black, its heart's been scarred
Forevermore.*

Perhaps after the election result people's hearts could not be said to have been dyed the Sandinista colours of red and black. They understandably voted for the quickest possible end to the nightmare of austerity, conscription and economic blockade that war with the US's Contra pawns had brought about. But the book is not closed – and when a Sandinista government next wins power it will be via the ballot box in a way that no global powers-that-be can dispute. And then we have every reason to hope that this government of poets will exact its personal revenge on the US by building a society more just and more meaningfully democratic than any other in the Americas.

Chris Brazier

Mi Venganza Personal by Tomás Borge, translated into English by Jorge Calderón.

Peru



Leader Alberto Fujimori

Economy GNP per capita \$1,470 (US \$18,530). Monetary Unit: The inti. Inflation at 2,000 per cent a year. Economic damage caused by political violence estimated at \$15 billion.

Debt: \$20 billion, one of the highest per capita in South America. Exports have been hit by changes in the exchange rate system to favour imports. Main exports are coca (illegal), crude oil, copper, silver, zinc, lead, fishmeal, textiles, cotton. Main imports are consumer goods, capital goods, armaments. High unemployment.

People 21.2 million

Health Infant mortality 87 per 1,000 live births. (US 10 per 1,000)

Culture 50 per cent Amerindian, 33 per cent mixed blood, 12 per cent white, 5 per cent black. Religion: Predominantly Christian (90 per cent Catholic)

Language: Spanish the official language. Major indigenous languages are Quechua and Aymara, widely spoken in mountain regions.

Sources: Peru Profile (Catholic Institute for International Relations 1990); UNDP Human Development Report 1990; DESCO Lima 1989; The Independent Newspaper, London, 11/5/1990.

Last profiled in October 1980

THERE is an old song often heard in Peru with a plaintive refrain: 'Aae mi Peru' (Oh my Peru!)

Whose Peru? one could ask. And which one? For many foreigners Peru is symbolized by images of Inca ruins like those at Macchu Pichu and of picturesque Indians tending llamas. It may come as some surprise to learn that these descendants of the Incas (called *serranos*) are often treated with scorn by their fellow Peruvians. Little wonder that the armed Maoist revolutionary organization the Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*) was born in the Andes and recruited from the literate children of the peasants.

The Andes are rich in resources – minerals, electricity and agricultural produce. But the profits of this wealth – like the mountain rivers – have tended to flow down to the metropolis, Lima.

Today coastal decision-makers easily forget that the mountains contain fellow Peruvians whose needs are very much greater than theirs. Many highlanders feel

that the only way in which they can get reasonable education, health and other services is to move to the capital – with the result that 68 per cent of the country's population now lives there.

But people born and bred on the coast (known as *costeños*) tend to look outwards, over the fish-rich Pacific ocean. They prefer to listen to *salsa* music (of New York/Cuban origin) than to the music of the Andes. In smart suburbs like Miraflores the profits of the illegal cocaine trade (Peru's biggest export commodity) are everywhere visible. Lima's shanty-towns are poor but hectic hives of popular action, of self-help initiatives, of feminism and of Marxist Liberation Theology.

Finally there is the jungle. At least 50 linguistic groups live here, and many of them now work together to campaign on land rights and other issues. In recent years, their relatively peaceful lifestyle has been disrupted by gold-diggers, cocaine mafiosi and the iron rule of *Sendero* guerillas, leading to death for many Indians.

Peru is a place of undeclared civil war and declared economic chaos. People desperately want change – and voted that way in the June elections. Alberto Fujimori was voted into power at the head of a new party called *Cambio* ('change'). Fujimori, son of Japanese immigrants and an agronomist by profession, has no political past to speak of. His present politics seem to be Centrist (although he has backing from Christian evangelicals). However *Cambio* tries to tackle the country's problems they will have to take on board the fact that there is not one Peru and certainly no 'my Peru' – whatever the old song may say.

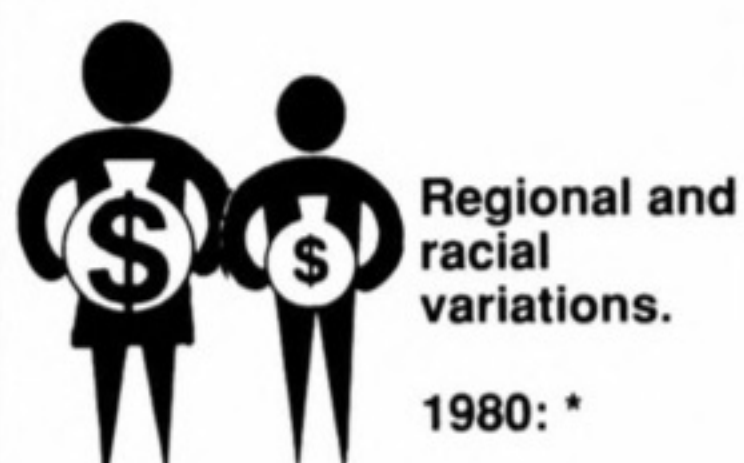
Vanessa Baird

At a glance



INCOME DISTRIBUTION

**

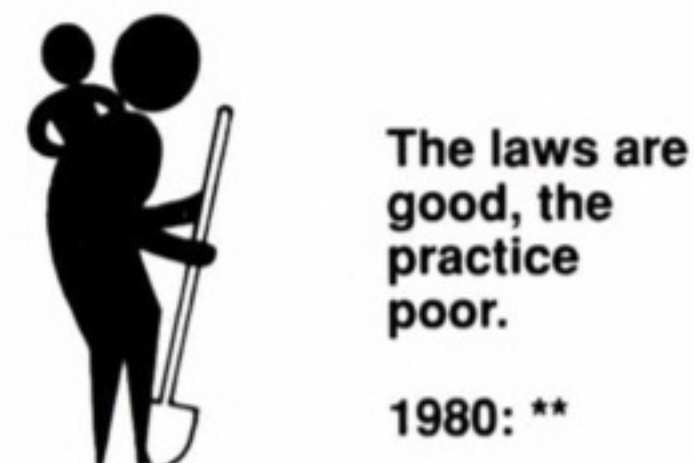


SELF-RELIANCE

**

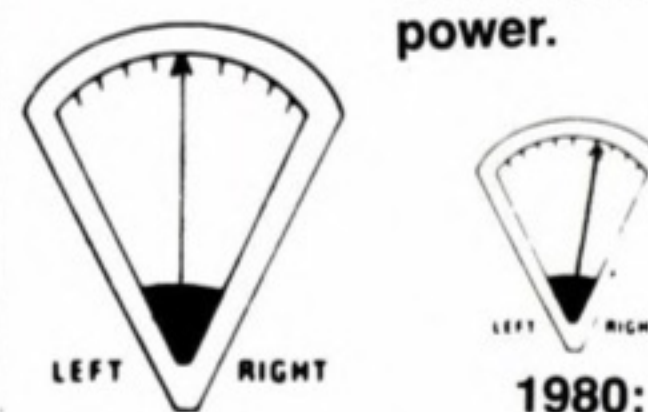


POSITION OF WOMEN

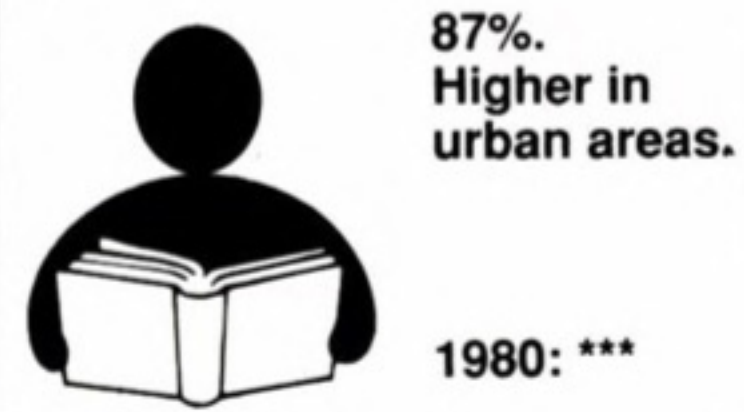


POLITICS

New party *Cambio* in power.



LITERACY



FREEDOM

**



LIFE EXPECTANCY

**



ABC

MEMBER OF THE AUDIT
BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS

CLASSIFIED

RATES £11.00 per single column centimetre. Minimum order £27.50 for 2.5cms (approx. 40 words), excluding VAT. Discount on three or more advertisements subject to negotiation. Copy date: seven weeks in advance of cover date, e.g. 8th April for June issue. Classified advertisements should be prepaid, cheques payable to New Internationalist Publications Ltd., 55 Rectory Road, Oxford OX4 1BW.

ANGLICAN PACIFIST

FELLOWSHIP We believe that our membership of the Christian Church involves the complete repudiation of modern war. We pledge ourselves to renounce war and all preparations to wage war, and to work for the construction of Christian peace in the world. Further information and newsletter from A.P.F., *Walters Farmhouse, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 7NU, UK.* Tel: (089272) 3962. New Zealand: A.P.F., 4 Roland Hill, Glen Eden, Auckland 7. USA: *Episcopal Peace Fellowship, 620 G Street SE, Washington DC 20003.*

DO YOU KNOW ANYONE who would, or would you, like to live, work and learn, with a group of co-workers and adolescents with varied special needs? The Pennine Community can offer board, lodging, pocket money and a very fulfilling time if you can offer a year of your time and a willingness to help. The Pennine consists of four households, craft workshops, small farm and vegetable gardens. Write to *Steve Hopewell, Pennine Community, Boyne Hill House, Chaplethorpe, Wakefield, WF4 3JH, UK.*

LANGUAGE COURSES for Development Workers. Wold School of English specialises in tailor-made EFL courses for Development Workers/Missionaries. Intensive individual/small group tuition 2 weeks – 3 months. Courses commence at your convenience. Contact *Heather Rosser, Ivy House, Osgodby, LN8 3PA, UK.* Tel: (0673) 82539.

SERVAS INVITES you to be a traveller and/or host in its world-wide network of international hospitality and friendship. Send a self-addressed envelope. *Servas International NI, North America and Canada: US Service Committee NI, 11 John Street, Room 706, New York, NY 10038. Australia: Servas Australia NI, 16 Cavill Court, Vermont South, Vic. 3133. Rest of the world: Servas International NI, Bankside Cottage, Welton-Le-Wold, Nr. Louth, Lincs., LN11 0QT, UK.*

WORLD GOODWILL

promotes an holistic spiritual approach to development issues. Free quarterly newsletter on United Nations; human rights and responsibilities; global spirituality etc. Papers by Prince Charles, Dalai Lama, Perez de Cuellar, Tarzie Vittachi, David Spangler etc. *World Goodwill, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EF, UK.*

THINKING ABOUT

COMPUTERS? We are a small consultancy specialising in advice to small businesses and voluntary organisations. We can also supply you with all necessary equipment and services. *Appropriate Technology (UK) Ltd., 99-101 Pixmore Avenue, Letchworth, Herts., SG6 1QX, UK.* Tel: (0462) 481888.

SENDING PERSONAL EFFECTS, BAGGAGE, FREIGHT ABROAD?

Contact the specialists. *Express Export Services Ltd., 143 Wardour Street, London W1, UK* on 071-734 8356/7/8. Collections from anywhere in the UK. Goods shipped to all parts of the world safely and economically, AMEX, VISA and ACCESS accepted.

IF YOU SEEK FRIENDS

interested in green issues, vegetarianism, alternative therapies, human and animal welfare, peace, justice and equality, and healthy, stress-free lifestyles, contact *Natural Friends (NI), 15 Benyon Gdns, Culford, Suffolk, IP28 6EA, UK* (stamp appreciated). Tel: (028484) 315.

DESERT RECLAMATION RESEARCH CENTRE.

Help our vital research whether expert or starter. Spain, sun, purpose, good company! Working visitors (work four hours per day). £40 per week. Concessions available. Guests £70 per week. Full details £1 from *Sunseed Desert Technology (N), Box 2000, Cambridge CB5 8HG, UK.*

AFRICA DON'T BE A TOURIST BE A GUEST

Host-based holidays in Ashanti, Ghana. Full choice of activities inc: Bird-watching, dance and music classes, visits, independent travel.

Ring today for details

Insight
Travel

Discount flights
also available

09952 6095 (24 hrs)

6, Norton Road, Garstang,
Preston, PR1 1JY, UK.

ISLAMIC INFORMATION

BUREAU invites readers to write for details of correspondence between itself and NI's editor for the 'History of the World' issue concerning many errors that were made in its coverage of Muslim beliefs and history. Please send a self addressed envelope (A4 size) to: *PO Box 914, London SE5 9TW, UK.*

DEFEND THE GAINS OF THE SANDINISTA REVOLUTION

by picking coffee on a Nicaraguan Co-operative for one month in December/January. Details from *Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, 23 Bevenden Street, London N1 6BH, UK.* Tel: 071 253 2464.

Careful and creative investments to help build a better world

An opportunity to invest directly in alternative production and marketing for Third World communities. Please write or phone for our information sheet:

One Village,
Charlbury, Oxford
OX7 3SQ
Phone 0993 812866

AFRICA: Overlands and Safaris to the continent of mystery and adventure. Timbuktu, the Gorillas and Rift Valley Game Parks. Itineraries from 6 to 29 weeks. Brochures: *Nomad Africa* (0672) 515 737. *Angel House, 7 High Street, Marlborough, Wilts., SN8 1AA, UK.*

LATIN AMERICA Low cost flights and adventure holiday journeys 3/4/5 weeks. Brochure: *Journey Latin America, 16 Devonshire Road, London W4 2HD, UK.* Tel: 081-747 8315.

COMING NEXT MONTH



East meets West... ... North forgets South?

The whirlwind of events in Eastern Europe has taken the world by storm. But how does the end of the Cold War affect the Third World? Next month's issue of *New Internationalist* takes us to Third World trouble spots to find out.

- Fidel, faithful enemy – who is left for the US Right to hate?
- Afghanistan – the Soviets have gone – but what on earth is going on?
- Changing colours in Ethiopia – Marx is out. What is in?
- The aid charade – will tougher conditions make African dictators change their ways?
- New friends – Tibet sees eye to eye with Romania.
- Black in the USSR – accounting for racism.
- Perestroika – arms reduction from an Indian viewpoint.

ETHICAL INVESTMENT

NOW YOU HAVE A REAL CHOICE

We offer an excellent selection of investment funds to those who want good financial returns but are unwilling to sacrifice principle.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO COMPROMISE

You CAN avoid your money going into armaments, alcohol, tobacco, gambling, nuclear weapons, the exploitation of animals, South Africa....and you CAN positively support pollution control, conservation of the environment and recycling of resources.

Socially responsible investment can now be geared to:-

- **PENSIONS** (For individuals, co-operatives, companies)
- **LUMP SUM INVESTMENTS**
- **MORTGAGES**
- **MONTHLY SAVINGS PLANS**

Contact Mark Cherrill or John Glavey

CHERRILL GLAVEY

INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL ADVISERS



IN THE FOREFRONT OF SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT

22, St. Mary's Street, Wallingford, Oxon. Tel: 0491 32278